

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE STREVELL
FAMILY OF PONTIAC, ILLINOIS**

by

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Abraham Lincoln and the Strevell Family of Pontiac, Illinois

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Foreword

Abraham Lincoln visited Pontiac, Illinois, on five separate occasions. Lincoln visited Pontiac twice in 1840 and was the lawyer who represented William Popejoy on his lawsuits with Isaac Wilson. Lincoln was the lawyer in another Pontiac case with County Sheriff Blue in 1843. In 1855, Lincoln spent several nights in Pontiac after being rescued from a train stuck in a snowstorm.

Lincoln's last visit to Pontiac was in January of 1860, when he gave a lecture at the Presbyterian Church. After the lecture, Lincoln spent many hours at the home of Jason Strevell before he caught his train to Bloomington. While at the Strevell house, Jason Strevell measured Lincoln's height and put a mark in the doorway at six feet four inches. The Strevell house in Pontiac has been fully restored by the Livingston County Historical Society and is open to the public for periodic tours.

Jason Strevell went on to serve in the Illinois State Legislature and Senate. He then moved to Montana and became a distinguished Judge. The adopted son of Jason Strevell became a very successful hardware store merchant in Ogden and Salt Lake City, Utah.

This book focuses on Lincoln's visit to the Strevell home in Pontiac and the history of the Strevell family. It is hoped this book will help to inform future generations about the history of the Strevell family and Abraham Lincoln's visit in 1860.

Acknowledgments

A few people in Pontiac were aware that Abraham Lincoln visited the Strevell House in 1860, and he had his height marked in a doorway in the house. By 2007, the Jason Strevell house at 401 West Livingston Street had fallen into a bad state of repair. The home was in danger of being torn down.

The Livingston County Historical Society had Guy Fraker as a guest speaker at their December 2007 meeting. At that meeting, Tom Ewing asked Mr. Fraker if he should save the house. Mr. Fraker highly recommended the house be preserved. In retrospect, Mr. Fraker gave the Historical Society an excellent piece of advice. Many thanks go to Mr. Fraker for his valuable advice.

Three Pontiac men then purchased the home and donated it to the Livingston County Historical Society. These three men were Collins Miller, Tom Ewing, and Donovan Gardner. Many thanks go to these three men for saving the historic home from the wrecking ball.

Collins Miller developed a fascination for researching the history of the Strevell home and family. Collins studied and collected many facts and data about the Strevell family. In 2022, Collins Miller donated his research materials to the Livingston County Historical Society. Much of the research materials found by Collins were used to research and write this book.

Tom Ewing was another one of the three men who helped save and refurbish the Strevell house. Tom played a valuable role in the fundraising activities required to support this house renovation project. Thanks go to Tom for providing information about the Strevell home and family.

Bob Sear was the President of the Livingston County Historical Society during the duration of the Strevell House ten year renovation. Many thanks go to Bob for providing the leadership required to complete the renovation project.

Ellie Alexander was in charge of the Tourism Department for the city of Pontiac during the ten-year renovation of the Strevell House. Many thanks go to Ellie for helping to promote the project and for helping with fundraising.

Many different people and organizations contributed funds to support this project. Thanks go to these individuals and groups for their financial support on this project.

Many thanks go to Judith K. Wells for helping transcribe some of the documents written in longhand writing into modern typed text. She also helped to check the book for grammar and spelling errors.

Thanks also go to the Staff members at the Livingston County old courthouse. They helped to find real estate transactions and property tax records from the 1850s and 1860s.

James S. Melvin, Sexton of the Pontiac Southside Cemetery, also helped with the grave records and burial locations for the Nettleton and Strevell plots.

Bob McCoy, Pontiac artist, created a unique illustration of Abraham Lincoln tipping his hat to Jason Strevell on the front porch of his home at 401 West Livingston. Thanks go to Bob for granting permission to use his illustration in this book.

Both the City of Pontiac and Enbridge are to be commended for their special support in the project to refurbish the Strevell House. Their support came at a key time in finishing the house refurbishment project.

CHAPTER 1

Book Design

There are four primary historical reference books used whenever research is performed about Livingston County, Illinois.

1878 History Book

The earliest published reference to Livingston County, Illinois history is William Le Baron's 1878 book titled *The History of Livingston County, Illinois*. This book will be called the 1878 history book in future references.

1888 History Book

The 1888 history book titled *Portrait and Biographical Album of Livingston County* by Chapman Brothers is the second Livingston County history book. This book will be called the 1888 history book in future references.

1900 History Book

The 1900 history book titled *The Biographical Record of Livingston and Woodford Counties* by S. J. Clarke is the third Livingston County history book.

1909 History Book

The 1909 history book titled *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Livingston County Volume Two* by Bateman and Selby is the fourth Livingston County history book. This book will be called the 1909 history book in future references.

Other Important Historical Sources

The Fairbury Blade has now been digitized and is word searchable back to 1871. Access to the Blade archives is free and available from the Dominy Memorial Library website. There were also other newspapers published in Fairbury between its founding in 1857 and 1871. Unfortunately, no copies of these early newspapers exist.

The Pontiac Sentinel was published from 1857 until about 1900. The Pontiac Library microfilm only goes back to 1871. The Sentinel is not yet digitized.

Unfortunately, the Pontiac Daily Leader has not yet been digitized. The Leader likely has articles about the Strevell family. Hopefully, the Leader will get digitized, and researchers will be able to search easily for new material about the Strevell family.

The Bloomington Pantagraph newspaper archives are also available online and can be searched back to 1838. There is an annual subscription fee required to access these archives.

Newspapers.com and GenealogyBank.com are two websites that contain archives of thousands of newspapers. Annual subscription fees are required to access these archives.

Google Books was an invaluable source for old books with information about the Strevell family. NOTE: You must utilize the Google Book option to find these books. The regular Google search feature does not readily identify these old publications.

Citations

If possible, references and dates will be noted for all materials used in this book. In the event no date is available, that fact will be noted.

Charles Nettleton Strevell Books

He wrote two books that were heavily utilized in writing this book. The first book was published in 1940 and was titled *Story of the Strevell Museum*.

His second book was published in 1943 and was titled *As I Recall Them*.

Lincoln Books

Guy C. Fraker, retired Bloomington attorney, has written two books about Abraham Lincoln. His first book published in 2012 is titled *Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency*. This book will be called Fraker's first book in future references.

Guy's second book was published in 2017 and is titled *A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit*. This book will be called Fraker's second book in future references.

Newspaper Stories

All newspaper stories cited in this book will be presented in the original wording of the article. If the copy of the article had adequate quality, it may be shown as an image. If the article is of poor visual quality, it will be transcribed into text.

Some of the newspaper stories contain information that is now known to be incorrect. For example, the 1954 Pantagraph article recounted that Lincoln spent the night at the Strevell House. We now know Lincoln spent the afternoon and evening at the Strevell House before catching his train to Bloomington. Lincoln did not spend the night at the Strevell House.

Archive.Org

Most of the rare documents discovered in researching this book have been uploaded to Archive.Org. Hopefully, this web site will survive for many years in the future, and future researchers can find this material.

Chronological Chapters

This book is designed in chronological order to make it easier to follow the story of the Strevell family.

CHAPTER 2

1752 to 1808

Strevell Family History

The family history of the Strevell family traces back to the arrival of Ulrich Strübel in 1752 from Germany. This family history came from Ancestry.com and a web page written by a Strevell family descendant. This web page can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/5e8su2wj.

The family web page recounts that Ulrich Strübel was the father of all the Strevels and Strevells in the United States and Canada. The Strübel's came from the State of Wuertemberg in Germany. Ulrich was born in 1728. He arrived in the colonies in 1752 when he was 24 years of age. Ulrich came to America with his father Jacob.

The original spelling of Ulrich's name, according to the church records, was Ulrich Strübel. His last name was often misspelled as Stribel or Striebel. He changed his last name to Strevel after arriving in America. Ulrich's line kept the Strevel name until the early 1800s when they switched to Strevell. By this time, the family was living in the Berne area of New York.

Ulrich Strevel married Margaretha Coon in 1758. Ulrich was 30 and Margaretha was 18 years of age when they married. They had six children. Ulrich and Margaretha Strevel settled on a farm in the Ancramdale area in Dutchess County, New York. This area was later changed to Columbia County. The farm is still there and is located on Crest Lane. Below is a photo showing the current condition of the house. The part of the house on the far right side is the original portion of the home.



One of the six children of Ulrich and Margaretha Stevel was Matheus Frederick Strevel. He was born in 1764 in Columbia County, New York.

Fighting began in the American Revolutionary war in 1775 and continued until 1783. At the start of the war, Ulrich Strevel was 47 years of age. At the end of that war, Ulrich was 53 years of age. Matheus Stevel was nine when the war started and was 17 when this war ended.

According to the family history web page, Ulrich is listed as a member of the 10th regiment of the Albany County Militia. In that era, men volunteered to serve, but they have never been called up for active duty. Unfortunately, many of the Revolutionary War records were burned in an Albany courthouse fire.

Tories from Livingston Manor were jailed at Kingston and questioned. A document recounts that Ildrick Streble, prisoner, saith that Amount Viele has in April last swore him to secrecy and alligence to King George at the house of Henrick Hoysradt.

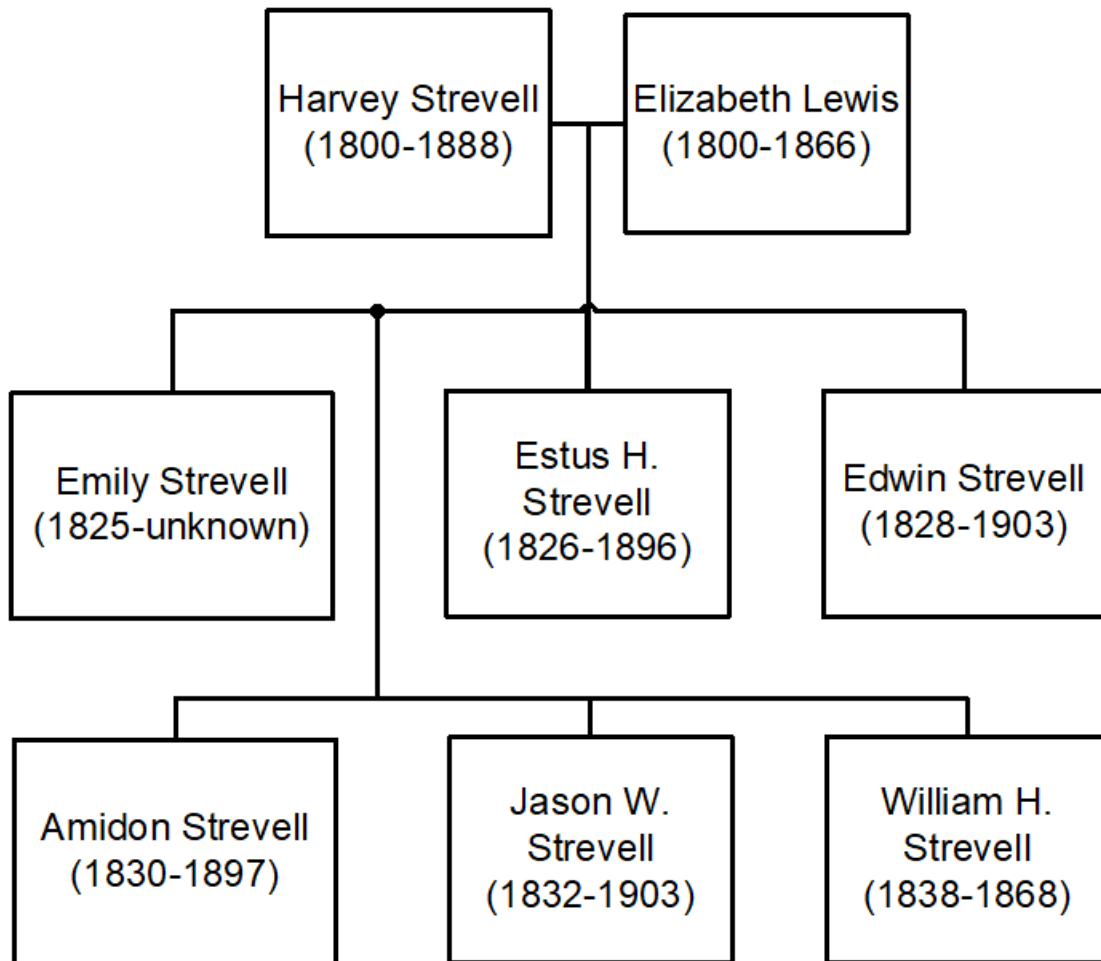
According to a document from the "Nine Little Partners", Ulrich Strevel was imprisoned as a Tory for a short while during the Revolutionary War. There is a record of the amount of peas and bread consumed by Ulrich when he was incarcerated.

Other accounts say that Ulrich was imprisoned until he would swear allegiance to Britain. These accounts make more sense as Ulrich was from Germany and had no ties to Britain.

Marriage of Matheus Strevel

In 1798, Matheus Fredick Strevel married Susannah Wright (1782-1863) in New York. He was 34 and she was 16. They had 8 children.

In 1800, son Harvey Strevell was born in New York to Matheus and Susannah Strevel. Harvey married Elizabeth Lewis (1800-1866) in New York around 1824. Both Harvey and Elizabeth were 24 years of age when they married. They had six children. The Harvey and Elizabeth Strevell family is shown below.



Of the six children of Harvey and Elizabeth Strevell, only Jason and William emigrated to Livingston County.

CHAPTER 3

1809 to 1836

Birth of Abraham Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. He eventually became the sixteenth President of the United States and served from 1861 until he was assassinated in 1865.

In 1818, Illinois became the 21st state in the union. Central Illinois was the last part of the State of Illinois to be settled. The land was swampy and there were no railroads in the center of the state. The Kickapoo Indian tribe was also living in Central Illinois.

Early Settlers

In 1830, Valentine Darnall became the first settler in Livingston County. Valentine and Rachel Darnall settled about 4 miles south of Fairbury. Other early settlers included the William McDowell family in 1832. Franklin Oliver, pioneer Chatsworth settler, also arrived in 1832.

Blackhawk War

In early 1832, Chief Black Hawk initiated the Black Hawk War. At that time, there were about 650 Kickapoo living at Oliver's Grove, three miles south of Chatsworth. The Chief of the Kickapoo advised Franklin Oliver that he could stay during the war, but the other settlers should leave the area. Most of the early pioneers decided to temporarily move to Indiana. The Kickapoo liked Franklin Oliver, so he stayed on his farm during the war.

Fortunately, the Black Hawk War only lasted five months. When the war was over, the Kickapoo were forced to leave the state of Illinois. The early settlers returned from Indiana back to their farms.

Birth of Jason W. Strevell

In 1832, Jason Woolrick Strevell was born in New York. His parents were Harvey and Elizabeth Strevell.

Birth of Zelus Nettleton

Also born in 1832 was Zelus H. Nettleton. He was born in Connecticut and his parents were Eli Nettleton (1797-1853) and Mary M. Hotchkiss (1803-1846). The family tree of Zelus H. Nettleton is shown in a future chapter.

Birth of William Crawford

William Crawford was also born in 1832 in New York City. His parents were Andrew Crawford and Elizabeth Turner. When William was eight years old, his family moved to Ohio. The schoolhouse in Ohio nearest to William's home was two miles away. The path from his house to the school went through a thick woods. On the first day of school, William's mother went with him and marked trees with her hatchet so he could find his way home after school.

The Weed and Young Family Arrive in Pontiac

In 1833, the Henry Weed family and the Youngs came to Pontiac from New York. Mr. Weed was a brother-in-law to the Young brothers because he was married to their sister. They built the first log cabin in Pontiac Township. Unfortunately, Mrs. Weed died just a couple years after they arrived in Pontiac. Mr. Weed then married one of his wife's sisters.

Birth of Jason Strevell's Brother

William H. Strevell (1834-1931), brother of Jason W. Strevell, was born in New York in 1834. Of the six children in that family, only these two brothers emigrated to the Central Illinois area.

Lincoln Obtains His Law License

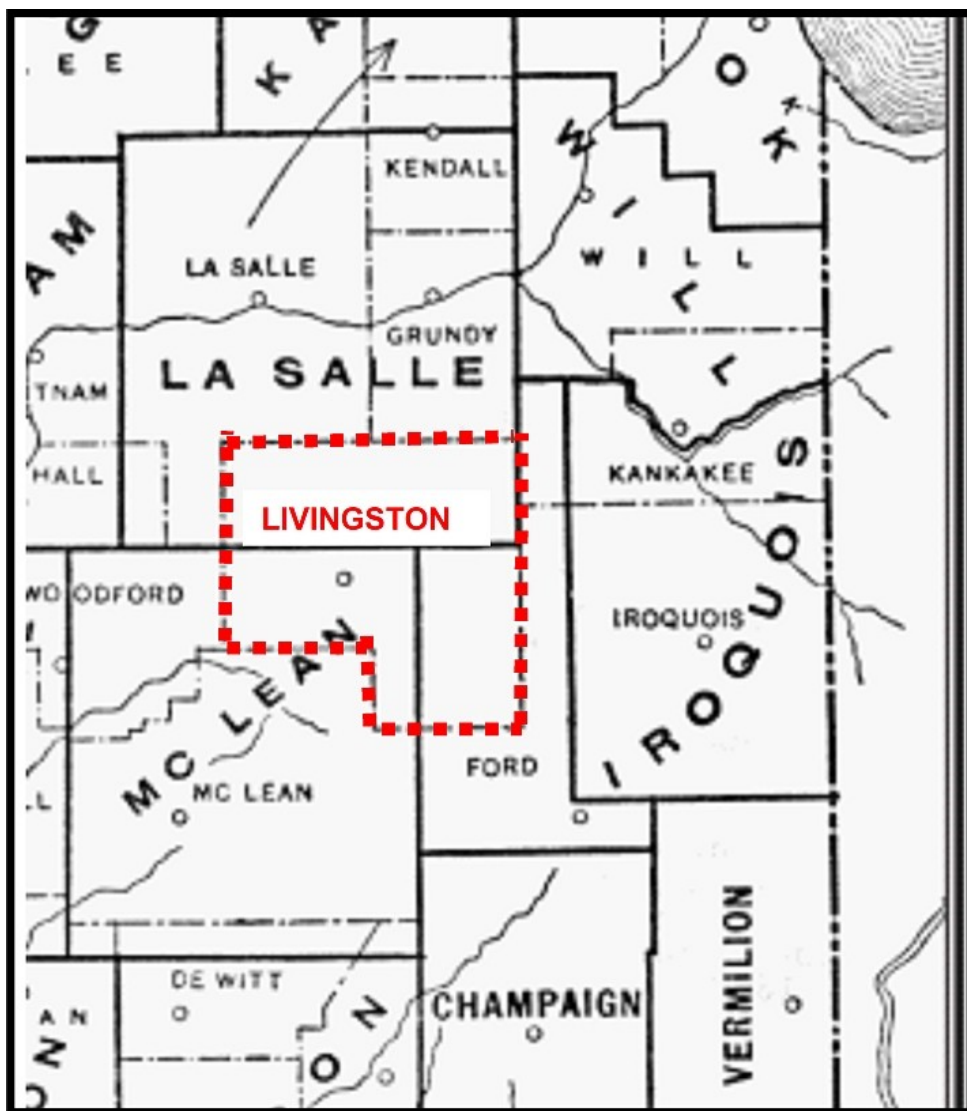
In 1836, at the age of 25, Abraham Lincoln obtained his law license. He began by writing legal forms and doing simple cases. Lincoln became a partner with Springfield lawyer John T. Stuart in 1837.

CHAPTER 4

1837 to 1848

Establishment of Livingston County

Livingston County was established on February 27, 1837. It was formed from parts of McLean, LaSalle, and Iroquois counties. The map below shows how the county was formed. This map came from a 2010 State of Illinois document showing how all the counties were formed. This map can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/4uyz22cd.



The new county was named after Edward Livingston, a prominent politician who was mayor of New York City and represented New York in the United States House of Representatives and Louisiana in both houses of Congress.

Pontiac as the County Seat

Just five months after Livingston County was created, the city of Pontiac was laid out on July 27, 1837 by Henry Weed and brothers Lucius Young and Seth M. Young. A small group of people gathered at the cabin of Andrew McMillan on the banks of the Vermilion River. Their plan was to create a seat for the newly established county of Livingston. The town they would design was nearly the last of hundreds of new towns laid out in Illinois between 1835 and 1837. This information can be found in the 1878 history book.

Lincoln's Law Practice

Abraham Lincoln's practice as a lawyer was centered in Springfield. However, between 1837 and 1858, Lincoln spent much of his time riding the Eighth Judicial Circuit, a division of counties established for the administration of the legal justice system in Illinois. The counties that made up the Eighth Judicial Circuit changed over time.

For more information about Lincoln's time riding the circuit, see Guy Fraker's second book titled *A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit*.

First Legal Ownership of Land in Pontiac Area was in 1840

Although Henry Weed came to Pontiac in 1833, his first legal ownership of land occurred in 1840. According to records from the Federal Bureau of Land Management, Henry Weed purchased the land that became the city of Pontiac.

Pontiac Township

28 North Range 05 East



Original town in
lower ½ of
Section 22

Lincoln as Lawyer in First Trial Held in Livingston County

Abraham Lincoln served as a lawyer in three cases that were heard in the Livingston County Seat of Pontiac. Two of the cases were in 1840, and the third case was in 1843. The first two cases in 1840 involved the same Fairbury citizens.

In 2022, the Fairbury Blade newspaper published a story written by the author about the 1840 cases where two Fairbury citizens sued each other.

Isaac Lincoln Wilson was born in 1812 in Greene County, Indiana. In 1835, at the age of 22, Isaac married 17-year-old Harriett Bishop in Indiana. The Isaac Wilson family moved from Indiana to Avoca Township in 1837. Isaac farmed in Avoca Township, and he hauled his grain to Chicago when that city was a small village almost buried in mud and mire.

When Livingston County was formed in 1837, Isaac Wilson was one of the first men elected to be a Justice of the Peace and served ten years in that position. In 1840, Isaac Wilson purchased 80 acres from the federal government in Section 36 of Avoca Township. This land is in the southeast corner of Avoca Township on Indian Creek.

William Champion Popejoy Sr. was born in 1793 in Darke County, Ohio. In 1817, at the age of 24, William married Rebecca Hannaman in Ohio. The William Popejoy family moved from Ohio to Avoca Township in 1831. In early 1832, the McDowell family settled on Indian Creek about three miles north of Fairbury. The Popejoy and McDowell families were among a small group of early settlers that temporarily went to Indiana during the 1832 Black Hawk War. They returned to their homes when the war ended.

In 1840, William Popejoy purchased four tracts of land from the federal government. William purchased a total of 280 acres in Section 11 of Avoca Township. William's farm was about four miles north of the farm of Isaac Wilson. William was about one mile from the village of Avoca, and Isaac was about three miles away.

In 1840, Isaac Wilson was 28 years of age, and William Popejoy was 47 years of age. Mr. Popejoy asked Mr. Wilson if he could rent his horse for a trip to Bloomington and back. Mr. Popejoy agreed to care for, feed and shod the horse plus pay Mr. Wilson \$1. Mr. Popejoy made the trip to Bloomington and returned the horse to Mr. Wilson. Unfortunately, the horse died soon after it was returned home. Mr. Wilson sued Mr. Popejoy and alleged that Mr. Popejoy had not taken proper care of his horse and requested \$300 in damages. Mr. Popejoy retained 31-year-old Abraham Lincoln as his attorney.

Isaac Wilson retained Stephen A. Douglas as his attorney. Only 27 years of age, Douglas was already famous throughout the State. Douglas was a fervent Democrat and one of the great orators of his day. Already he had been Attorney General of the State and a member of the Illinois House of Representatives. Later that year, he would be appointed Secretary of State, and in 1841 he would be appointed a Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, the youngest man ever to serve

on that tribunal. Douglas was also clearly a young man rising swiftly in the world.

Since Livingston County was founded in 1837, no permanent courthouse had been built by 1840. The court hearings were held in a cabin owned by Henry Weed. The jury held its deliberations on a pile of sawn logs on the banks of the Vermilion River in Pontiac.

The trial of Wilson versus Popejoy was held in May of 1840. This trial was the first legal case ever decided in Livingston County. Mr. Lincoln lost the case, and the jury found in favor of Mr. Wilson. However, Mr. Lincoln was able to get the \$300 sought by Mr. Wilson reduced to \$70.25.

A few months later, Isaac Wilson alleged that William Popejoy had stolen meat from Mrs. William McDowell at the village of Avoca. Mr. Popejoy responded by saying he had not stolen the meat, and he sued Mr. Wilson for slander. Mr. Popejoy continued to use Abraham Lincoln as his attorney for this legal matter. Mr. Wilson hired Burton C. Cook as his attorney.

The court hearing for the slander suit of Popejoy versus Wilson was conducted in Pontiac in October of 1840. Mr. Lincoln won this case, and the jury awarded \$2,000 to Mr. Popejoy. This amount was considered a significant judgment in that era. This amount of money would be equivalent to \$52,620 in today's dollars.

William Popejoy spent several years farming in Livingston County before moving to Cropsey in McLean County. In October of 1845, William Popejoy signed a contract to have a new house built. The contractor, James S. Coberly, built a frame house twenty-eight feet long, eighteen feet wide, and nine feet high. There was a porch on each side of the house and one room eight feet square at each end of one porch. William was to furnish the timber from his farm along with all other material. The contract related the construction cost was one hundred thirty dollars, which was paid in cows, pork, one horse, and a two-horse wagon. The cows were given to Mr. Coberly when the work started, a horse and three hundred pounds of pork on March 1, 1846, and the balance on December 1, 1846. William Popejoy died in 1848 at the age of 55.

Isaac Wilson moved from Avoca to Pleasant Ridge Township in 1853. Mr. Wilson died in 1888 at the age of 75.

In 1858, the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates took place. In that era, U.S. senators were elected by the state legislature, not the popular vote. Douglas won the U.S. Senate seat, but the debates made Lincoln famous as a national figure and helped him win the presidential election in 1860.

Subsequent generations of descendants of William Popejoy continued to live in the Cropsey area. William Popejoy is the third great grandfather of Ray Popejoy, founder of Popejoy Plumbing, Heating, Electric, and Geothermal company in Fairbury.

Additional Information on First Courthouse

Per the 1878 Livingston County History Book, the first Courthouse was erected in 1839-40, by Henry Weed, Lucius Young and Seth W. Young. The three men proposed that they would erect the courthouse at their own expense if the county seat was located on the land selected by them. They posted a bond of \$3,000 to guarantee they built the courthouse. The men built the courthouse.

Jason Strevell Studies the Law

An online search found an undated book by A. W. Bowen titled *Progressive Men of the State of Montana Volume One*. Jason was still alive when book was written, so was written before 1903 when he died. This book has a biography of Jason Strevell including how he became a lawyer.

Jason W. Strevell was educated in the famous old Rensselaerville Academy, in Albany county, N. Y., and then began reading law with Peckham & Tremaine, prominent members of the Albany bar.

Third Lincoln Case in Pontiac in 1843

In September of 1843, Lincoln appeared as a lawyer in another case heard at Pontiac, Illinois. Mr. Blue, the acting Sheriff of Livingston County accused Eliza Allen of perjury. Then Eliza and her husband Moses Allen sued Blue and accused him of slander. The jury found Sheriff Blue guilty and awarded the Allens \$250. Mr. Blue retained the law firm of Logan and Lincoln to appeal the case to the Illinois Supreme Court. The Allens failed to file the right paperwork and defaulted in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court reversed the judgment against Sheriff Blue.

All of the legal cases that Abraham Lincoln was involved with can be searched at the web site at Tinyurl.com/2p8eu559.

Z. H. Nettleton in the 1845 Michigan Census

In this Census, Z. H. Nettleton was living with his father, Eli Nettleton, in Constantine, Michigan.

Zelus H. Nettleton Builds House in St. Joseph County, Michigan, in 1847

Wikipedia has an entry for this home that is included in the National Register of Historic Places. This information can be accessed at [Tinyurl.com/2p8893u6](https://www.tinyurl.com/2p8893u6). The Wikipedia entry is noted below.

The Nettleton-Cond House, also known as the Wells-Bryan House, is a single family home located at 260 South Washington Street in Constantine, Michigan. It was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2021.

History

This house was constructed in 1847 by Zelus Nettleton, at a location one lot south of its present location. Nettleton sold the house to John M. Wells in 1849, who lived there until 1853. In 1867, Charles Cond purchased the house and the lot adjacent (where the house stands now). At some point between 1874 and 1884 he moved the house to its present location. Cond willed the house to his son Louis after his death, who passed it on to his wife Katherine. In 1913, Katherine Cond sold the house.

The house changed hands frequently in the subsequent years, until 1972, when it was sold to Robert and Janet Miller. The Millers ran an antique store in the house into the 1980s. In 1977, the house was listed in the Michigan State Register of Historic Sites as the "Wells-Bryan House." David and Angela Beegle purchased the property in 1997, living there until 2020. In 2021, it was sold to Arthur and Jenni Roberts.

Description

The original part of the Nettleton-Cond House is a one-and-one-half story wood frame Greek Revival structure measuring 24 feet by 30 feet. Two one-story additions at the rear were constructed later in the 19th century. The facade of the house is three bays wide and asymmetrical, with the main entrance in the southernmost bay, reached by a small porch. The other two bays contain identical windows, with additional windows in the second floor above the first floor door and windows.

The corners of the house have wide wooden pilasters. Above the second floor is a cornice, with frieze and pediment above. The roof is shallow.



Home built by Zelus H. Nettleton in 1847 in Constantine, Michigan

The number assigned to this property in the National Register of Historic Places is 100006782. A copy of the application to include this home on the National Register may be accessed at [Tinyurl.com/32z5j9sb](https://tinyurl.com/32z5j9sb).

Second Home Built by Zelus Nettleton in Constantine

While he was living in Constantine, Michigan, Zelus Nettleton built another home at 185 West Third Street. This house is in the Carpenter Gothic Style. It utilized drop pendant bargeboards on the front and side of the home. These drop pendant bargeboards are identical to the ones on the Strevell House in Pontiac, Illinois.



Front view of Carpenter Gothic Style home built by Zelus Nettleton at 185 West Third Street in Constantine, Michigan



Side view of Carpenter Gothic Style home built by Zelus Nettleton at 185 West Third Street in Constantine, Michigan

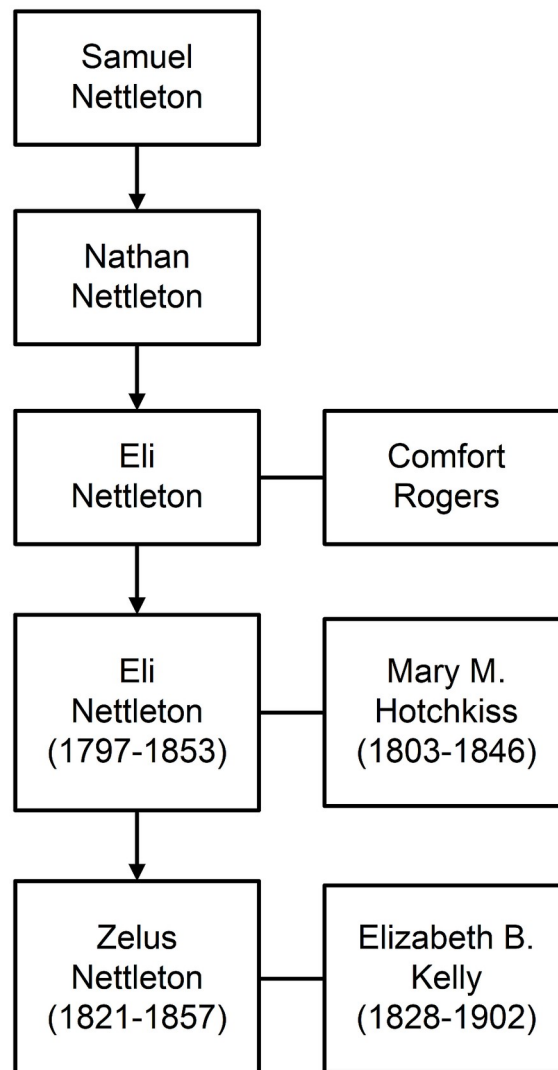
According the application to place the Greek Revival home at 260 South Washington Street in the National Registry of Historic Places, Zelus Nettleton sold this home for \$1,550 in 1853 and he then moved to Pontiac, Illinois.

CHAPTER 5

1849 to 1853

Family Tree of Zelus Nettleton

Determining the family tree for Zelus Nettleton was a very difficult process. A cousin of Charles Nettleton Strevell wrote him a letter in 1896 that explained the family tree. The letter will be recounted later in the future chapter that covers the 1896 era. The family tree is shown below.



All of Zelus Nettleton's ancestors lived and died in the Orange, Connecticut except Eli Nettleton (1797-1853) who moved to the St. Joseph County, Michigan area.

Marriage of Zelus Nettleton

It is likely that Z. H Nettleton married Elizabeth Butler Kelly around 1849. Their son, John H. Nettleton, was born in 1849 in Michigan. There is a State of Illinois marriage record indicating that Z. H. Nettleton married Elizabeth Kelly in Illinois but no marriage year is given.

Family Tree of Elizabeth Butler Kelly

Several sources recount that Elizabeth Kelly was born in Michigan in 1828. Her grave stone in the Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago has her date of birth as 1828.

Her obituary in the July 12, 1902 edition of The Butte Daily Post reported that Elizabeth was the daughter of Dr. John Kelly of Chicago. Extensive online searches of a Dr. John Kelly in Chicago were unsuccessful with respect to clarifying his identity.

Two other obituaries for Elizabeth did not report any information about her father. An online search found an undated book by A. W. Bowen titled ***Progressive Men of the State of Montana Volume One***. This book has a biography for Jason Strevell and it noted that Elizabeth Kelly was the daughter of Dr. John Kelly of Lake City, Minnesota. This book turned out to be the critical piece of information which revealed the life-story of Dr. John Kelly.

A descendant of Dr. Kelly constructed a family tree in Ancestry.com. This family tree reported that Dr. Kelly was born in 1801 in Orange County, New York. In 1817, at the age of 16, he emigrated to Pennsylvania. The descendant put together the following timeline for Dr. Kelly.

John Kelly married Esther Bishop (1795-1866) in Pennsylvania in 1820. John was 19 and Esther was 25 years of age when they married.

In 1823, John and Esther Kelly moved to Ohio. Son Moses C. Kelly was born in Ohio in 1825. Around 1828, the family moved to Kalamazoo, Michigan. Daughter Elizabeth Kelly was born in 1828 in Michigan.

In 1829, Dr. Kelly purchased 80 acres of land in Section 10 of Prairie Rondee Township in Kalamazoo. Son David Kelly was born in Kalamazoo in 1831. The family moved to Saint Joseph, Michigan around 1845.

In 1853, John and Esther Kelly moved from Michigan to Florence, Minnesota, in Goodhue County. Dr. Kelly purchased 160 acres of land under the half-breed act. Dr. Kelly was 52 years of age when he emigrated to Minnesota.

In 1858, Dr. Kelly became the first chairman of the town board of supervisors. Unfortunately, on March 2, 1866, Esther Kelly died in Minnesota at the age of 70 in Lake City, Minnesota.

Obituary for Dr. John Kelly

The March 10, 1866, edition of The Lake City Leader newspaper published an obituary for her.

DIED

On the 2d inst., Esther, wife of Dr. John Kelly, aged seventy years and eight months.

The deceased was one of the oldest residents of the Lake Pepin Valley. She was extensively and favorably known. One of the largest assemblies ever convened in Lake City paid their parting respects to her on Sunday. She died in the hope of soon being raised up to everlasting life.

“Asleep in Jesus—blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep.”

In August of 1866, Dr. Kelly married Julia Doane in Galena, Illinois. She was born in 1808.

1878 Biography of Dr. Kelly

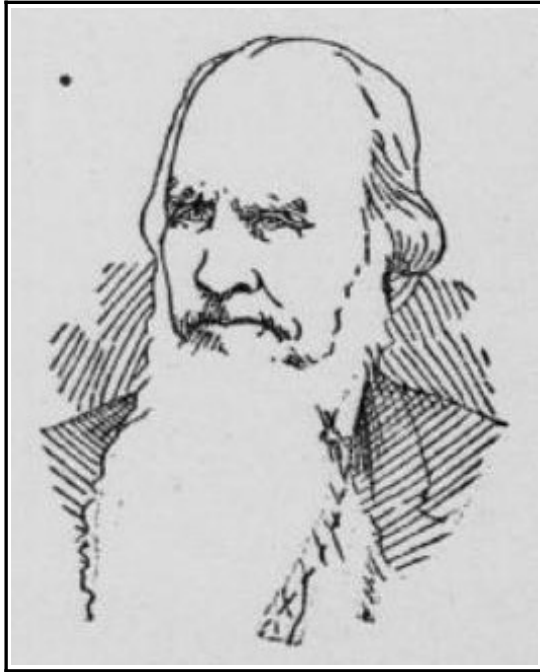
A biography of Dr. Kelly was published in the 1878 book titled *The History of Goodhue County* by Wood, Alley & Co.

KELLY, DR. JOHN, retired physician, residence Central Point, P. O. Lake City. Born in Orange county, N. Y., in 1801, and with parents emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1817, where in 1820 he married Esther Bishop. She was born in Lansingburgh, Rensselaer county, N. Y., in 1795. In 1823 moved to Ohio, and in 1829 to Kalamazoo, Mich., where he pre-empted 160 acres of land, and lived until 1845, when he moved to St. Joseph county, and in 1849 crossed the plains to California, returning by way of the Isthmus the following year. In the spring of 1853 came to this county and settled near the town plat of Florence, where he purchased 160 acres under the half breed act, and is the oldest living settler in this township.

In 1866 his wife died, leaving four children, Franklin, Moses, Elizabeth and David B. His present wife, Julia Doane, was born in Worcester county, Mass., in 1808. In the spring of 1869 he moved to Lake City, where he resided until 1874, when he moved to his present estate, where he lives in retirement. Was chosen one of the board of supervisors the first organization of the State and county, and is otherwise identified with the interests of the town and county. Mary, Sarah E., and Annie J. are their living children.

1888 Biography of Dr. Kelly

In March of 1888, when Dr. Kelly was 88 years of age, the St. Paul Daily Globe published a story about his life.



St. Paul Daily Globe
March 30, 1888

THE OLDEST PIONEER

Dr. John Kelly Has Lived on the Shores of Lake Pepin Thirty-Five Years

Red Wing, March 29.—Dr. John Kelly, the subject of the accompanying portrait, who resides in Central Point Township, Goodhue County, enjoys the distinction of being the oldest pioneer resident in one of the oldest counties in the state. On the 15th of last February he entered upon the eighty-eighth year of his age, and for a man of this mature years he is enjoying remarkable good health. His career has not been an uneventful one. He was born in Orange County, New York, Feb. 15, 1801. At twenty-one years of age he came to Homes County, Ohio, where he remained six years. He then removed to Kalamazoo, Mich., where he remained until 1847, when he crossed the plains to California, returning by the way of the Isthmus of Panama. In 1853, thirty five years ago this summer, he came to Minnesota, settling near the town plat of Florence Township, then entering upon an era of what was supposed would be unlimited prosperity. Here he purchased 160 acres of land under the half-breed act, and here he still is in the eighty-eighth year of his life, hale and hearty, the oldest person in that section. He has held several positions of public

trust, and is esteemed by all who know him as honorable and upright in all his dealings.

Dr. Kelly and Julia lived in Lake City, Minnesota, until his death in 1892 at the age of 91. The Alliance Standard newspaper of Willmar, Minnesota, published an obituary for Dr. Kelly on February 2, 1892.

LAKE CITY, Minn.—Special, Jan. 30—Dr. John Kelly, a pioneer settler in Lake Pepin Valley, died yesterday at his residence in Central Point, aged ninety-one years. Deceased was born in Orange County, New York, commenced the practice of medicine in Kalamazoo, Mich., in 1845, and in 1849 crossed the plains to California, where he accumulated a fortune as a miner. He was married twice and leaves a widow, three sons and one daughter.

Land Purchases of Dr. Kelly in Minnesota

The U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management maintains a web site where one can search and determine who bought land from the federal government. This web site can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/ydnhkz35.

This web site was searched using John Kelly and Goodhue County. The search results are shown below.

Names 	Date	Doc. #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Sec. #	County
 AVLESSEN, PEDER,  KELLY, LEWIS,  KELLY, JOHN	6/1/1868	89310	MN	5th PM	110N - 018W	E½SE¼	1	Goodhue
					110N - 017W	Lot/Trct 9	6	Goodhue
 KELLY, JOHN,  WHITFIELD, WILLIAM,  MILLER, SAM	8/15/1860	90384	MN	5th PM	112N - 013W	Lot/Trct 3	24	Goodhue
					112N - 013W	S½SE¼	24	Goodhue
					112N - 012W	Lot/Trct 1	19	Goodhue
 KELLY, JOHN	4/2/1857	1651	MN	5th PM	112N - 013W	Lot/Trct 3	24	Goodhue
					112N - 013W	S½SE¼	24	Goodhue
					112N - 012W	Lot/Trct 1	19	Goodhue

The first land purchase was in 1868. Closer examination of this transaction showed that this John Kelly was a veteran of the War of 1812 and was deceased at the time of the transaction. Since he was a veteran, he was awarded a land patent or grant of 160 acres. Since he was deceased, the grant was awarded to his minor son Lewis Kelly. He in turn sold his land rights to Peter Avlessen. Since Dr. John Kelly was still alive in 1868, this is not his land transaction.

The next two land sale transactions from the search are a little bit confusing. The transactions are for the same parcels of land that total up to 121.75 acres.

The 1857 transaction identified that John Kelly paid cash to purchase this land from the federal government. He likely paid \$2.50 per acre because this was the government price in that era.

The 1860 transaction recounts that John Kelly bought the land patent originally issued to Sam Miller, warrior, who fought in the Seminole War under Captain William Miller's Company. Sam Miller then assigned his land patent to William Whitfield, who in turn assigned it to John Kelly. The database also recounted this transaction fell under the Script Warrant Act of 1855. The Script Act of 1855 modified the Script Act of 1850 and recognized Native American veterans as eligible for land grants.

Comments on Elizabeth Kelly Family Tree

When Dr. John Kelly left Kalamazoo to travel to the gold fields of California in 1848 as part of the California Gold Rush of that era, daughter Elizabeth Kelly would have been 20 years old. Unlike almost all the men who went to California during the gold rush, per his obituary, Dr. Kelly struck it rich in California.

The 1845 Michigan Census lists Z. H. Nettleton as living in Constantine Township in St. Joseph County, Michigan. Since Elizabeth Kelly was also living in the St. Joseph area, Zelus and Elizabeth must have first met when they were both living in the St. Joseph area.

1850 U.S. Census

In the 1850 U.S. Census, Zelus H. Nettleton was 29 years of age and was a carpenter. He was born in Connecticut. He was married to Elizabeth Nettleton and she was 22 years of age. Their son, John H. Nettleton, was living with them and was less than 12 months of age. Zelus owned \$3,500 of real estate, which would be equivalent to \$118,000 in today's dollars. The Zelus Nettleton family lived in Constantine Township in Michigan.

597	500	Zelus H. Nettleton	29	m	Carpenter	3500	Conn
		Elizabeth	22	f			
		John H.	1	m			

Zelus Nettleton Family Moves to Pontiac in 1853

According to the application to place the Greek Revival house in Constantine on the National Registry, Zelus Nettleton sold the Carpenter Gothic house he build at Constantine in 1853 and moved to Pontiac, Illinois.

CHAPTER 6

1854 to 1857

The 1855 Illinois State Census shows the Z. H. Nettleton family was living in Livingston County. The Nettleton family moved to Pontiac in 1853.

The 1878 Livingston County history book reported the first newspaper was published on March 14, 1855. In this paper, it was reported that Z. H. Nettleton was “finding some sale for jewelry, and clocks and watches were needing repairs.” Mr. Nettleton was apparently involved with selling jewelry and repairing clocks in addition to his work as a carpenter.

The complete Title/Abstract document for the house at 401 West Livingston Street was recently discovered. This document covers the history of who owned the land where this house is now situated from the time the land was first purchased by Henry Weed from the federal government in 1840. The five pages of this document that cover the time that Z. H. Nettleton and J. W. Strevell owned the land can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/2ft595kc.

This document reports that Z. H. Nettleton purchased the southeast corner of Block 27 in Pontiac from Henry Stevens for \$175 on July 26, 1855. This sale was recorded in Book G at the old Livingston County courthouse on December 6, 1855.

Z. H. Nettleton likely constructed the home at 401 West Livingston Street by the end of 1855 or in early 1856. This home was designed using the Carpenter Gothic style of architecture. Wikipedia has a definition for this architectural type.

Carpenter Gothic

Carpenter Gothic, also sometimes called Carpenter's Gothic or Rural Gothic, is a North American architectural style-designation for an application of Gothic Revival architectural detailing and picturesque massing applied to wooden structures built by house-carpenters. The abundance of North American timber and the carpenter-built vernacular architectures based upon it made a picturesque improvisation upon Gothic a natural evolution. Carpenter Gothic improvises upon features that were carved in stone in authentic Gothic architecture, whether original or in more scholarly revival styles; however, in the absence of the restraining influence of genuine Gothic structures, the style was freed to improvise and emphasize charm and quaintness rather than fidelity to received models. The genre received its impetus from the publication by Alexander Jackson Davis of *Rural Residences* and from detailed plans and elevations in publications by Andrew Jackson Downing.

History

Carpenter Gothic houses and small churches became common in North America in the late nineteenth century. These structures adapted Gothic elements, such as pointed arches, steep gables, and towers, to traditional American light-frame construction. The invention of the scroll saw and mass-produced wood moldings allowed a few of these structures to mimic the florid fenestration of the High Gothic. But in most cases, Carpenter Gothic buildings were relatively unadorned, retaining only the basic elements of pointed-arch windows and steep gables. Probably the best known example of Carpenter Gothic is the house in Eldon, Iowa, that Grant Wood used for the background of his famous painting *American Gothic*.

Characteristics

Carpenter Gothic is largely confined to small domestic buildings and outbuildings and small churches. It is characterized by its profusion of jig-sawn details, whose craftsmen-designers were freed to experiment with elaborate forms by the invention of the steam-powered scroll saw. A common but not necessary feature is board and batten siding. Other common features include decorative bargeboards, gingerbread trim, pointed-arched windows, wheel window, one-story veranda, and steep central gable. A less common feature is buttressing, especially on churches and larger houses.

Ornamental use

Carpenter Gothic ornamentation, referred to as gingerbread, is not limited to use on wooden structures but has been used successfully on other structures especially Gothic Revival brick houses such as the Warren House in a historic district in Newburgh, New York, which is said to epitomize the work of Andrew Jackson Downing, but was actually done by his one-time partner, Calvert Vaux.

Jason Strevell Comes to Pontiac in 1855

Several printed sources recount that Jason Strevell moved from New York to Pontiac in 1855 including his obituary in the February 2, 1903, Anaconda Standard newspaper.

The 1855 New York State Census reported that 23 year old Jason Strevell was still living with his parents in Albany County, New York. Jason must have been still finishing law school because he listed his occupation as none. Jason must have moved to Pontiac after the New York State Census was completed.

Lincoln's 1855 Stay in Pontiac

The February 8, 1940, Pantagraph published a story about Lincoln's stay in Pontiac in 1855.

Of Human Interest

LINCOLN IN PONTIAC

BY MARTHA LIVINGSTON. Pantagraph Reporter in Chatsworth.

CHATSWORTH.—(PNS)— With the accent on democracy the February days which precede the birthday of Abraham Lincoln are the most fitting season during which to re-emphasize the facts and stories which we know about our countryman. Although Livingston county was too far from Mr. Lincoln's home to be the scene of his everyday experiences, we treasure the few accounts we have of his visits here.

Mr. Lincoln's first recorded in Livingston county was In 1840 when he appeared in Pontiac at a trial. We have no report of the date or the details of this trial. The young lawyer was at the county seat again in 1855. This visit was not of his own volition. We retell an interesting anecdote connected with the occasion.

SNOWBOUND.—In February of the above year the train on which Mr. Lincoln was traveling from Chicago to his home in Springfield, became snowbound north of Pontiac. A messenger was sent to the city to inform the railroad agent of the passengers' predicament. The agent explained the situation to the citizens. It being before the days of snow plows, the people were accustomed to struggles with the wind and weather. They immediately formed a party of volunteers who took teams and sleds through the raging storm to the rescue of the snowbound travelers. The rescuers were equipped with blankets from many homes and the rescued were wrapped in them and brought to Pontiac warm as well as safe.

Mr. Lincoln with several others was assigned to the home of John McGregor. Mr. McGregor, the first attorney to locate in Pontiac, lived in a new house at the corner of West Madison and North Oak streets. We do not know whether it

was several days or several weeks before the road was cleared and the train able to precede.

NON PAYING GUEST.—Tradition tells us that when Mr. Lincoln left the home he attempted to pay Mrs. McGregor for his board and lodging. The hostess refused emphatically. The two young daughters, Emma and Elizabeth, who had undoubtedly been enjoying the excitement of a house full of strangers, accompanied their visitor to the gate.

If the little girls had been excited when the company arrived imagine how they felt when they discovered that upon departing the tallest of the guests had left them each a gold dollar.

Mr. Lincoln's final appearance in the county was Friday evening, Jan. 27, 1860 when he spoke before the Young Men's Literary association of Pontiac. This time he was the guest of the Hon. Jason W. Strevell, young attorney and hardware merchant. Abraham Lincoln spoke at the Presbyterian church. The lecture was criticized for lack of originality.

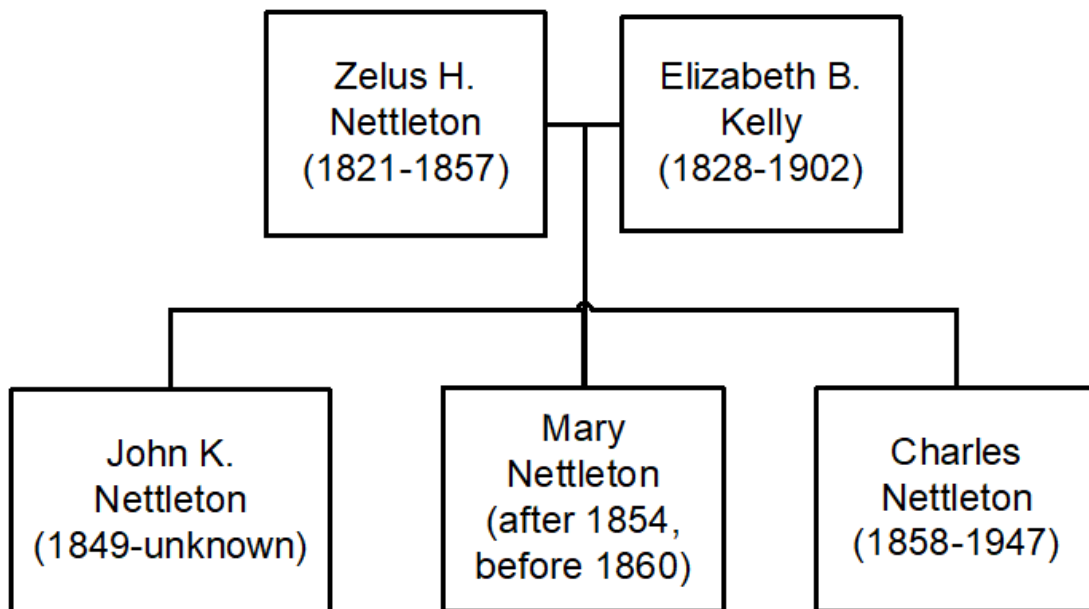
1855 Illinois State Census

This census reported that Z. H. Nettleton lived in Livingston County. The census reported there were four people in the Z. H. Nettleton family. There was one male under 10 years of age, one male between 30 and 40 years of age, one female under age 10, and one female between 20 and 30 years of age.

In 1855, when the census was taken, Z. H. Nettleton was 34, Elizabeth Nettleton was 27, and John K. Nettleton was six years of age. The girl in this census was born between 1846 and 1854. Unfortunately, except for Z. H. Nettleton, there are no other first names in this census.

Sometime between 1930 and 1947, Charles Nettleton Strevell created a hand written Strevell family genealogy document and filed it at the University of Utah library. In this document, C. N. Strevell identified that Zelus H. Nettleton and Elizabeth Kelly had a daughter named Mary Nettleton. Mr. Strevell's entire genealogy report will be reviewed later in this book.

By the time of the 1860 U.S. Census, Mary Nettleton had apparently died. She is not included as part of the family in that census. The family of Z. H. Nettleton is shown below.



Incorporation of Pontiac in 1856

The 1878 Livingston County history book also reported that the village of Pontiac was incorporated under the general law of the State on February 12, 1856, by the election of a Board of Trustees, consisting of Nelson Buck, J. W. Strevelle, S. C. Ladd, Z. H. Nettleton and H. Jones-the first named being chosen Chairman or President. This entry in the history book documents that Mr. Strevell and Mr. Nettleton knew each other in 1856.

The Pontiac Presbyterian Church

Mr. Strevell was very involved with this church. The 1878 history book recounts that Mr. Strevell became very involved with this church in 1856.

But few towns of the size of Pontiac are better supplied with church privileges than this. At a very early day in the history of the place, church services were held, but not till a comparatively modern date was there a church organization, or even regular service. A Methodist class was organized in 1850; and irregular services by Presbyterian clergymen were held in the old Court House, and in the Buck Hotel a little later; but no building was erected, or even an organization effected, until 1855.

The first preaching by a Presbyterian minister was in 1852, by Rev. Amasa Drake, of Chicago. The services were conducted in the hotel named, and were at irregular intervals. Rev. Mr. Day, of Morris, preached a few times in the old Court House, as did also Parson High. The first regular preaching was by Rev. L. H. Loss. in 185, when he organized the Presbyterian Church of Pontiac. The church was organized October, 1855. The original members were William J. Murphy, Sen. And wife, Abel C. Kidder and wife, and Mrs. Maria Buck, the total number being but five.

The Rev. I. T. Whittemore, was the first pastor chosen, in 1856. Under his administration, was the first church building in the town and (with one exception) in the county erected. This was built in 1856, at a cost of nearly \$3,000. It was considered, in its early days, a very handsome and commodious edifice, and doubts were entertained whether the society needed so extensive a structure, or would ever see the time when its capacity would be equaled by its congregation.

Not only did it outlive its usefulness, but it saw during its existence the erection of five others, four of which are larger and much more expensive. In 1872, it was decided by the society to replace their old building, by one commensurate in size to their increased wants; and their present neat and substantial house of worship was erected. The old building was sold to Wallace Lord, and is used by him as an opera. house, and though it is no longer a place of worship, it is still the Lord's house. The new building was constructed at a cost of a little over \$18,000, including grounds. Its size is forty-two feet in width, and, including the chancel, ninety in length; and it is capable of seating about four hundred persons. The present membership of the church is 162.

The Pastors in charge of the society since Whittemore have been Adam Johnson, Alonzo P. Johnson, J. McConnell, W. H. Gardner, R. Kessler, and the present Pastor, Rev. Benjamin L. Swan. The Sunday school in connection with this church was organized in 1855, with forty scholars, and with Rev. W. J. Murphy as Superintendent. The next year, J. W. Strevelle was elected Superintendent, and held the office continuously until 1870. The present Superintendent is A. W. Kellogg. The school numbers at this time 180 scholars.

Death of Z. H. Nettleton in Pontiac in 1857

The FindaGrave web site has a listing created for Z. H. Nettleton and it is memorial ID 117816311. That listing reports that Z. H. Nettleton was born in 1821 and he died on October 30, 1857. He was buried in Pontiac's South Side Cemetery, apparently in an unmarked grave.

This is the only source that documents the death of Z. H. Nettleton. The State of Illinois did not required death certificates until 1916, so there is no official death certificate. No obituary could be found for Zelus Nettleton.

If Zelus was born in 1821, he would have been 36 years of age when he died. In 1957, his wife, Elizabeth Kelly, was 29 years old. Their son, John H. Nettleton, was eight years old when his father died.

Mrs. Nettleton was eight weeks pregnant when her husband died.

Mrs. Elizabeth Nettleton placed an ad in the November 23, 1857, Pantagraph for selling her deceased husband's clock making equipment. The ad was retyped for clarity and is shown below.

For Sale.

THE SHOP, TOOLS, AND ENTIRE
STOCK OF Clocks, Watches and Jewelry,
formerly owned by Z. H. Nettleton, deceased,
and located in the village of Pontiac, Ill., is
now offered for sale, and any person desirous
of locating themselves in the business of
watchmaking and repairing, cannot do better
than accept this opportunity. There is an
excellent shop, and full set of tools for
watchmaking and repairing generally.
Address or call on MRS. E. B. NETTLETON.
Pontiac, Ill., Nov. 11th, 1857
d3m225

1857 Livingston County Elections

The 1878 history book reported that J. W. Strevell received 465 votes and J. H. Hagerty received 480 votes to become the county School Commissioner.

The November 4, 1857, Pantagraph reported that the Republicans of Livingston County had nominated Jason W. Strevell to be the County School Commissioner.

Founding of Fairbury in 1857

In 1857, the Peoria & Oquawka Railroad extended its railroad from Peoria east to the Indiana border. When the railroad neared the area that is now Fairbury, Caleb Patton, a local farmer, entered a competition with two other farmers to see if the new railroad could be run through their farm. A new town could be created and the inexpensive farm land could be converted to many city building lots making a lot of money for the landowner. Mr. Patton won the competition by offering railroad engineer Octave Chanute half of the building lots if the railroad was run through his farm.

Mr. Patton was not interested in the details of creating a new town, so he sold his land to A. J. Cropsey. An excerpt from a Fairbury Blade newspaper article written by the author about A. J. Cropsey is shown below.

Colorful Founder of Cropsey

June 12, 2022

By: Dale C. Maley

The village of Cropsey and Cropsey Township were named in honor of Andrew Jackson Cropsey. The story of Andrew Cropsey began with his birth on December 22, 1823, in Niagara County, New York. His parents were Daniel W. Cropsey (1797-1882) and Elizabeth Straight Cropsey (1797-1871). Andrew left home to go to Cincinnati to become a lawyer. In 1847, he married Maria Jane Harrington (1825-1874). She was an accomplished daughter of a widow living in the suburbs of Cincinnati. She was skilled at sewing and made dresses for a neighborhood clientele.

A.J. Cropsey had four sons with his first wife. The four sons were Daniel Burns Cropsey, Louis Edward Cropsey, Allen J. Cropsey, and Cassius M. Cropsey. Two additional sons died in infancy.

After two years of practice as a lawyer in Cincinnati, he moved to Will County, where his parents had moved. In 1854, Andrew moved to what is now Cropsey Township. He was the first settler in the Cropsey area. A.J. Cropsey did not remain long. He moved to Fairbury, the nearest railroad point to his farm.

Fairbury was founded in 1857 by Caleb Patten when the railroad tracks were laid. In 1859, Mr. Patton disposed of his interest in the town lots to Andrew J. Cropsey. Mr. Cropsey became the primary real estate developer in the new village of Fairbury.

In the 1860 U.S. Census, A.J. Cropsey was shown living in Indian Grove Township. His occupation was listed as a farmer. He had \$8,000 in real estate and \$2,000 in his personal estate. This net worth would be equivalent to \$288,000 in today's dollars.

As we will see later in this book, A. J. Cropsey was associated with the Strevell family in Illinois and Utah.

CHAPTER 7

1858 to 1859

Birth of Charles Nettleton in 1858

Several sources document that Elizabeth Nettleton gave birth to a son she named Charles Nettleton in June of 1858, in Pontiac, Illinois. Mr. Nettleton's grave stone in Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery has a birth date of June 2, 1858. His obituary in the September 22, 1947, Salt Lake Telegram newspaper published his birth date as June 3, 1858. The biological father of Charles Nettleton was Zelus Nettleton. Elizabeth Nettleton was eight weeks pregnant when her husband died.

Per the 1900 U.S. Census, Jason Strevell married the widow Elizabeth Nettleton in 1859. When they married, Jason was 25 and Elizabeth was 29 years of age. Son John H. Nettleton was ten years of age when his mother married Jason Strevell. Charles Nettleton was an infant of about one year old.

Jason Strevell Stockholder in Insurance Company

The June 30, 1859, Pantagraph published a list of stockholders in the Western World Insurance & Trust Company. One of the stockholders was J. N. Strevell from the firm of Strevell & Kensell in Pontiac, Illinois. It is assumed the newspaper had a misprint of J. W. Strevell's initials.

Jason Strevell's Brother in Bad Accident

Apparently Jason Strevell's brother William H. Strevell, followed him from New York to Pontiac, Illinois. The July 11, 1859, edition of the Pantagraph reported that William H. Strevell was badly injured on the 4th of July by the explosion of an anvil the citizens were using as a substitute for a cannon. The Pantagraph reported that it was thought that William would lose his eyesight.

William H. Strevell was born in 1834 in Albany County, New York. He married Mary Cannon on January 1, 1859. When the accident happened, William was 25 years of age.

J. J. Gowan Requests that Abe Lincoln Talk at Young Men's Association in Pontiac

Mr. Gowan wrote a letter to Abraham Lincoln on September 13, 1859. He requested that Mr. Lincoln come give a talk at Pontiac to energize the Republican voters before the November, 1859 elections.

The original handwritten letter is difficult to read. A copy of the original handwritten letter can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/3u8fx4s5.

Fortunately, someone transcribed the letter into modern typed text. The transcription is shown below.

Pontiac, Ills Sept.13th 1859

A. Lincoln Esq.
Springfield; Ills

Dear Sir,

I received yours of Aug. 10th. Was glad to learn by it that you would lecture for us sometime during the coming fall or winter if that would suit us. Any time that you may fix upon will be agreeable to the association, we should like for you designate the time, also the subject and the charge that you make for the lecture, so that we can make arrangements for the fall + winter course.

If you could make it convenient to come sometime between this and the 20th of Oct. we (the republicans) would get up a Republican county Mass Meeting. For we are sadly in need of help to arouse the apathetic republicans in this county for the coming fall election. Philip Cook editor of the Sentinel is the nominee of the Republicans for Treasurer. On his election depends too a great degree the life of our paper. We can elect him if we can get the Republicans aroused from the state of apathy that they seem to be in. We think that if you would consent to come and give us a speech at a general county convention that it would arouse the cold to a sense of duty. We sincerely hope that you may find it convenient to give us help in this our time need. You can give us a speech in course of the day and lecture at night. Let us hear from you soon.

yours truly,

J. J. Gowan
Secretary of Young Men's Literary Ass.
Pontiac Ills.

High Winds in Pontiac in November of 1859

The November 30, 1859, edition of the Chicago Tribune ran a story about the high winds and damage in Pontiac, Illinois.

Chicago Tribune

The Late Gale in Central Illinois

[From the Bloomington Pantagraph, 25th]

The high wind which prevailed here on Friday evening rose to quite a violent and destructive hurricane at Pontiac and in that vicinity. A friend from this city was in Pontiac in the height of the storm, having come down hither from Dwight on the evening train. He says the blow came on between 4:30 and 5:00 P.M., and was very violent, blowing from the west with great fury for fifteen minutes or so.

The house he was in at the time rocked and trembled in the tempest, and it required all his strength to hold fast a door which faced the wind. The air was full of flying boards, boughs of trees, and other debris driving before the gale. As it became dark very shortly after, he had not the opportunity to see the great deal of the effects of the storm in the town.

He saw, however, the fine Court House in a half-ruined condition, the tower, chimneys and roof being shaved off down to the brick wall, and some damage done inside by the falling rubbish. Estimates of the damage ranged all the way from two thousand up to five thousand dollars. The loss must necessarily be considerable. The whole cost of the building was, we believe, about fifteen thousand dollars.

Mr. Strevell's store was unroofed, and its windows blown in. Our friend also learned that two dwellings which he did not see were blown completely to pieces. One of them was a good two-story frame, owned by a carpenter, who had a neat shop adjoining it, the whole being just new. House and shop were a total wreck, and a young lady living in the house was injured very badly, and indeed fatally, as was supposed. The other house which was entirely destroyed was a widow woman's, and was understood to be about the whole property of the unfortunate owner, who had just finished paying for it out of her savings. We do not know the names of either of these sufferers.

Quite a number of houses were pushed off their foundations, and some of them turned quite around, also several barns unroofed, etc. One case was reported where a wing of a house was torn to pieces, having several women and children in at the time, who, however, escaped unhurt. The main building was blown off its foundation, but not much injured.

A dispatch came from Odell to Pontiac just after the storm, calling for a couple of doctors to come up with their surgical instruments. It was understood that three houses were blown down at Odell, that a Frenchman had his leg broken

in two places, and that another man was badly hurt. It was also said that two houses were demolished at Dwight, and that some persons were hurt there. Some of these reports may prove to be exaggerations.

The telegraph operator at the Western Depot says in a note on Saturday morning:

“I have not the particulars, but six or eight houses were blown down at Pontiac, besides unroofing the Court House and several other buildings; one woman badly hurt. Two houses blown down at Odell; one man badly hurt.

[From the Peoria Transcript, 18th]

The amount of damage to the N.S. Presbyterian church by the gale on Friday is estimated at some \$700 or \$800. A subscription paper has been started for the relief of the society and we trust that our citizens will liberally respond. The damage to Tom Mason's house on Jefferson Street, by the falling of the tower roof of the Catholic church upon it, was more than we were aware of, when we wrote our account of Saturday. The mass fell on one corner of the roof, breaking through and tearing out a portion of the gable end of the house. The veranda was torn to pieces, and the front yard fence broken down.

This newspaper story documents that Jason Strevell ran a store in Pontiac. In 1860, the population of Pontiac was 733 and the population of nearby Fairbury was 269. There was not yet enough of a local population to support a full-time lawyer. Jason Strevell likely ran a store to supplement his income as an attorney. Jason had to earn enough money to support himself, his wife, her two sons, and one daughter.

CHAPTER 8

1860

Lincoln Gives Speech in Pontiac in January of 1860

When Jason Strevell moved from New York to Pontiac in 1855, he joined the Young Men's Literary Association in Pontiac. This group had guest speakers come to Pontiac and talk to their group.

This group had asked Abraham Lincoln to be their guest speaker at least two times. Lincoln finally agreed to come to their meeting on January 27, 1860 and to speak at the Pontiac Presbyterian Church.

After the speech, Jason Strevell invited Abraham Lincoln to stay at his home at 401 West Livingston Street in Pontiac until Lincoln's train arrived to take him to Bloomington.

The most detailed account of Lincoln's 1860 visit to Pontiac is published in the 1943 book *As I Recall Them* written by Charles Nettleton Strevell. In this book, Charles Strevell includes a letter written by his father, Jason Strevell, about the Lincoln visit to his home in Pontiac.

Abraham Lincoln

In January, 1860, Abraham Lincoln delivered a lecture in the old home town, Pontiac, Illinois, his subject being "The Wheel and Axle." He was entertained at our home during the night and ate at our table. I have been told that at this time I sat on Lincoln's knee. I was about two years old. After the lecture and following the reception, Mr. Lincoln and father were visiting and the question of height came up. Mr. Lincoln stood beside a door and asked that his height be measured. My father measured his height, six feet four inches, and cut a notch showing it.

I have the door casing in the collection of Lincoln-iana now in the Strevell Museum. After securing it, I wrote father for his recollections of this incident and his reply follows:

Lincoln's Height—6'4"

Miles City, Montana
March 21, 1901.

"Dear Charles:

I send you today, such recollections as I have, connected with my measuring the height of Mr. Lincoln. You tell me that you took off the door casing and that you have it. It is certainly an interesting relic.

The incidents connected with my measuring Mr. Lincoln's height were about as follows:

"The young men of Pontiac, Illinois, in the winter before Mr. Lincoln was nominated for president, had undertaken to maintain a lecture course which was much more in vogue then, than now. Among the lecturers secured, was Mr. Lincoln.

I introduced him to a very large audience and before introducing him, I asked him what subject I should announce for his lecture and he replied 'The Wheel and Axle.' That lecture, though one of the most interesting that I ever heard before or since, was never found in his papers; it was a written lecture, but no trace of it was ever obtained after his death.

He was entertained at our house during the night and, after the lecture, there was a general reception, a large number of citizens of the town calling upon him during the evening. After the reception had closed and all of our family except Mr. Lincoln and myself retired, he and I sat up until about twelve o'clock, in conversation, a great deal of which I could repeat here, but it is not necessary to do so.

I do not know, nor have I been able to remember at all, what incident it was brought up the subject of his height. He said that he was six feet four; I told him that it scarcely seemed possible to me that he was four inches taller than myself.

"I am just six feet. 'But at all events,' he said, 'you can take my height if you wish'; and I did so, he standing with his back to the door-casing which you now have, and I taking the measure with great caution, I think with a two foot rule. I remember very distinctly when I was placing the rule on top of his head to get as near a perfect level as I could, noticing how heavy and coarse his black hair was. He had a heavy head of hair and it was very coarse and black.

The measure was taken in his stocking feet; he had some time previous to that, 'pulled off his boots,' and he proved to be just the height you will find on the door casing, which I think is exactly six feet four.

If you should be at all interested in any portion of the conversation I had with him that evening, I can give you a sample of it.

The time of which I am speaking was in the troublous days of slavery and anti-slavery, and one portion of the country was in sentiment entirely arrayed against the other, the North against the South, and the heated condition of the public mind soon eventuated in the clash of arms between the North and the South.

Our conversation was largely upon this subject. I said to him, 'I believe you will be nominated for president at the approaching convention in Chicago.'

I did not know then, what his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith afterwards told me was true, that he did not like to have anyone say to him that he would be nominated;

I suppose that it was upon the ground that there was a great deal of that talk which he himself regarded as flippant and much of it said, perhaps, with a mere idea to please him. This he did not like. In answer he asked me with a rather stern countenance why I said that.

“I soon gave him proof that I did not say it without what I regarded as a good reason for doing so; he and Douglas had their joint debate two years before. I said to him, ‘Douglas will be nominated at Baltimore and the people will never be satisfied until you and he have had this contest out on a broader field than the one in which you were engaged in your joint debate.’ This was a conviction of mine, and I think it immediately addressed itself to him as a conviction.

“Well,’ he said, ‘what you say of Mr. Douglas being nominated at Baltimore may be true, and it may not, but I can tell you one thing, he will not be nominated at Baltimore without a great fight.’ The event proved how much better he understood the situation than I did. The convention at Baltimore resulted in a tremendous fight and a split, but he said, ‘Even if what you say should turn out to be true, I do not see how that would necessitate my nomination as you seem to think.’

“He then said, which his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith, stated to me afterwards was probably as much as he ever said to anyone, ‘I have thought that I might be named for the second place on the ticket but not for anything higher.’

“In talking in relation to this matter as he had presented it, I asked him who would, in his judgment, be nominated. He said, ‘I think Mr. Seward will be nominated.’ His prediction that Seward would be nominated would have proven to be entirely true had it not been for Horace Greeley who went into the convention as an alternate from one of the western territories.

“I often met Mr. Lincoln during my residence in Illinois and had many conversations with him in relation to professional and political subjects. I was a member of a state Republican convention in which it was decided unanimously to present his name at Chicago.

“I never saw Mr. Lincoln alive after his election, but your mother and myself received an autographed letter written entirely in his own hand urging us to visit him at the White House, but that visit was never made.

Yours,

(Signed) J. W. Strevell.”

First Newspaper Account of Lincoln's Pontiac Speech

One newspaper in Pontiac in that era was The Sentinel. This newspaper published a story on January 31, 1860, on page three about Lincoln's Pontiac lecture. An original copy of this article can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/3cwpa8p6. The original article in the Sentinel was one very long paragraph. The transcription below adds paragraphs for ease of reading.

Pontiac Sentinel

January 31, 1860

Page 3

LINCOLN'S LECTURE

Hon. Abraham Lincoln, of Springfield, delivered a lecture before the Young Men's Literary Association of Pontiac, at the Presbyterian Church, on Friday evening last. It was totally unknown to the Association up to noon that day, that he intended coming; but being in Bloomington and having previously received two invitations to lecture here, Mr. Lincoln thought this a favorable opportunity to fulfill it. He telegraphed up that he would be on hand that evening.

Notwithstanding the little time intervening (some five or six hours) until the lecture was delivered, a crowded house greeted the lecturer. The lecture pleased us very much, both in style of delivery and the ideas advanced. His subject was what might be termed a medley—a variety of topics (philosophic) being treated. The whole thing was new to us, and the ideas were conveyed in simple and beautiful language so clear that no difficulty was experienced in comprehending them.

Fault has been found with the lecture, some of the literary critics about town contending that little originality, if any at all was contained in it. In other words, they themselves (the critics) say, in so many words, that Lincoln spent one hour in telling them what they knew before! Gentlemen, ain't that a little too modest!

It certainly follows that they must have pondered on these self same ideas; else how could they know that they were not original! The amount of the matter is just this—a more satisfactory subject, doubtless could have been selected—one that would suit us all much better.

But, while this is true, no unprejudiced listener will deny, that the manner in which he treated the subject-matter in hand, was well worthy of the lecturer. We are all of very much prone to expect that when a man of Mr. Lincoln's reputation speaks on any subject whatever, he will carry us completely away. We should reflect that new ideas are not discovered every hour—they are not the creation of a day, nor a month, nor a year; and there are few men today, even in one of their most brilliant and captivating lectures, can advance half a dozen original ideas.

This difficulty can readily be recognized by us all, when we consider our own limited knowledge. How many of use, and especially, how many of those who are so sharply criticizing Mr. Lincoln's lecture, ever, throughout our whole lifetime, promulgated a single new idea.

We are too much inclined to find fault with the production of others, without considering our own diminutive intellectual attainments. Let us consider but for a moment how little we ourselves know, and we will not be half so quick in detecting the deficiencies of others.

1940 Pantagraph Story About Lincoln's Lecture

This February 8, 1940, story focused on when Lincoln was stuck in Pontiac in 1855 during a snowstorm. Near the end of the article, there is a mention about Lincoln's lecture in Pontiac in 1860.

Mr. Lincoln's final appearance in the county was Friday evening, Jan. 27, 1860 when he spoke before the Young Men's Literary Association of Pontiac. This time he was the guest of the Hon. Jason W. Strevell, young attorney and hardware merchant.

Abraham Lincoln spoke at the Presbyterian Church. The lecture was criticized for lack of originality.

It is likely the reporter that wrote the 1940 Pantagraph article had read the 1860 Sentinel story to draw the conclusion the lecture was criticized for lack of originality.

Book Reference to Lincoln's Pontiac Speech

Guy C. Fraker, in his first book about Lincoln, has a paragraph describing Lincoln's speech at Pontiac.

On January 27, 1860, Lincoln gave his lecture, not a political speech, to the Young Men's Literary Association of Pontiac at the Presbyterian Church. By telegram, Lincoln abruptly accepted a long-standing invitation and took a train to get there in time for the lecture the same day. In spite of the short notice, a crowded hall awaited him. One attendee observed, "I think the people generally were disappointed in his lecture as it was on no particular subject and was not well-connected," expressing his wish that Lincoln had spoken about politics.

Attorney Jason Strevell, a locally prominent Republican, introduced him; later that night, the two sat up until midnight discussing politics as Lincoln awaited the train for his return to Bloomington.

As the evening wore on, they began comparing their relative heights; Strevell proposed they measure, and Lincoln agreed. His height in stocking feet—six-foot-four—was measured on a door jamb. Strevell was a Livingston County delegate to the Republican State Convention in Decatur in May, as was Lincoln's old friend Richard Price Morgan, now living in Dwight.

Strevell House Very Busy on January 27, 1860

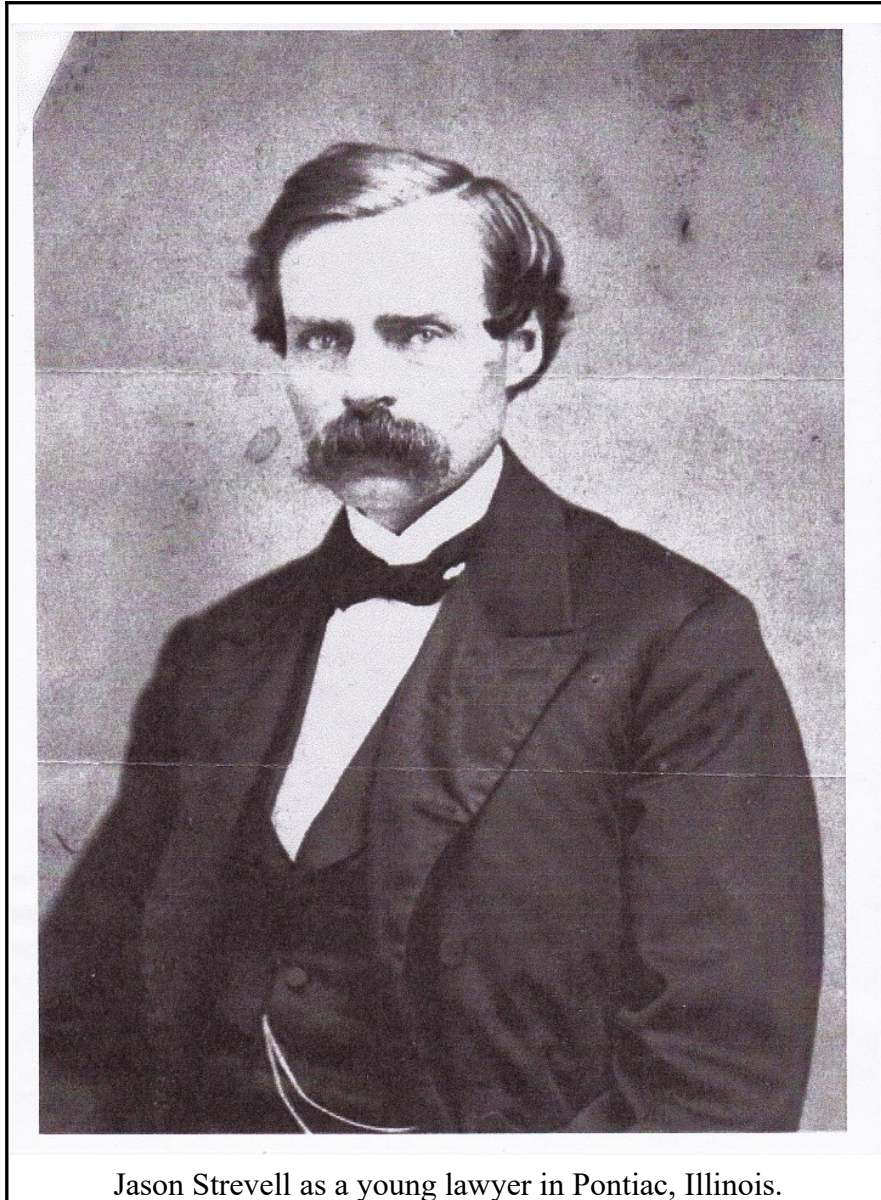
Jason Strevell and Elizabeth Kelly had a daughter born on January 27, 1860. Her birth date is engraved on her grave stone in the Chicago Rosehill Cemetery. They named their daughter Helen Louise Strevell.

Prior to the birth of Helen Strevell, Mrs. Strevell had delivered three children when she was married to Zelus H. Strevell. Helen was her fourth child. Many medical studies indicate that unless there are complications, there is usually less labor time involved with later births compared to the first baby.

It is possible that Mrs. Strevell gave birth to Helen in the early morning hours of January 27, 1860. Another possibility is that Mrs. Strevell gave birth in the late evening hours of January 27 after Mr. Lincoln had left her home. Regardless of the circumstances, Mr. Strevell was able to attend Lincoln's speech in the afternoon and then invite him to spend the evening at his house.

Photo of Jason Strevell in Era When Lincoln Visited His Home in Pontiac

This undated photo was taken when Mr. Strevell was a young lawyer in Pontiac, Illinois.



Jason Strevell as a young lawyer in Pontiac, Illinois.

Republican Wigwams

During the 1860 election, Illinois Republicans held conventions in temporary wood and canvas structures dubbed “Wigwams.” They were reminiscent of the “Log Cabins” from the 1840 presidential campaign. They quickly became symbols of the young Republican party’s vigor. The wigwams were easy to construct, spacious, and conducive to generating party spirit. They made ideal political assembly halls.

“Every Republican club in every considerable town will have its Wigwam,” party leaders boasted. More information about the wigwams can be found at Tinyurl.com/ycyzdktc.

1860 Decatur Republican State Wigwam Convention

The Illinois Republican Party held its state convention in a wigwam in Decatur, Illinois, on May 9, 1860. A tent that was 100 feet wide and 70 feet deep was borrowed from a local circus company. Approximately 2,500 Republicans attended this convention.

For Livingston County, Jason W. Strevell from Pontiac and A. J. Cropsey of Fairbury were selected to be delegates to the Decatur convention.

The Illinois Republicans adopted a resolution stating “Abraham Lincoln is the first choice of Illinois for the Presidency, and that our delegates be instructed to use all honorable means for his nomination at the Chicago convention.”

1860 Republican National Convention

Less than one week after the Decatur state convention, the Illinois Republicans kept their word and nominated Lincoln for President at a wigwam building in Chicago.

1860 Presidential Election

This election was held on November 6, 1860. There were four candidates on the ballot for President. Abraham Lincoln from Illinois was the Republican candidate. He received 180 electoral votes with 150 needed to become President.

The second candidate was John C. Breckenridge from the Southern Democratic party. He received 72 electoral votes.

The third candidate was John Bell from the Constitutional Union Party. He received 39 electoral votes.

The fourth candidate was Stephen A. Douglas from Illinois. He received 12 electoral votes.

Abraham Lincoln became the 16th President of the United States.

CHAPTER 9

1861 to 1872

Civil War Begins in 1861

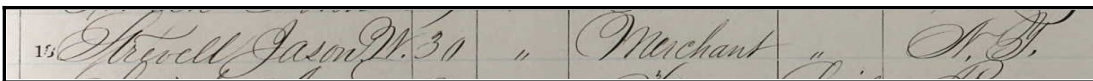
Abraham Lincoln's presidential term started on March 4, 1861. Just over a month later the Civil War began when the Confederate army began the Battle of Fort Sumter.

A. J. Cropsey of Fairbury recruited men to form the Illinois 129th Infantry Company E. Mr. Cropsey mustered into the Union Army on September 8, 1862, at Pontiac, Illinois as a Major. He enlisted for three years.

On May 15, 1863, Mr. Cropsey was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel at Gallatin, Tennessee. He continued to serve until he resigned on February 27, 1864. After the war ended, Mr. Cropsey moved and became a major real estate developer in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Jason Strevell Registered as Eligible to Serve in the Civil War

In July and August of 1863, Captain Isaac Keys made a list of the men in the Eighth Congressional District that were eligible to serve in the Civil War. A copy of this record is contained on the Ancestry.com website. Jason W. Strevell from Pontiac is included on this list.



No record could be found that Jason W. Strevell actually served in the Civil War.

Jason W. Strevell Becomes Illinois State Representative in 1864

Mr. Strevell won the election to be an Illinois State Representative and served two terms as a State Representative. In 1864, Jason W. Strevell was 32 years of age. His adopted son Charles was six and stepson John Nettleton was 15 years of age.

President Lincoln Appoints Strevell to Work at Custom House

In 1864, Mr. Strevell's friend, President Abraham Lincoln, appointed him to serve as a clerk at the Custom House in New Orleans, Louisiana. A custom house or customs house was traditionally a building housing the offices for a jurisdictional government whose officials oversaw the functions associated with importing and exporting goods into and out of a country, such as collecting customs duty on imported goods.

In 1868, a book was published and titled *The Executive Documents of the House of Representatives for The First Session of the Fortieth Congress*. This book has a chart which shows all the people working at the Customs House in New Orleans in 1867. There were a total of 32 federal government employees working in the Customs House in 1867. Twenty-two of these employees had a job title of Clerk. Mr. J. Strevell is listed on this chart as one of the clerks.

Increase of compensation granted to persons employed in the collection of the revenue—Continued.

Names.	Office.	District or port.	Amount of increase per annum.
Henry Lovejoy.....	Clerk.....	Baltimore, Maryland.....	\$200 00
J. L. Parkhurst.....	Deputy collector and inspector.....	Georgetown, District of Columbia...	400 00
John P. Hilton.....	do.....	do.....	200 00
Jacob Young.....	Temporary inspector.....	do.....	205 00
W. H. Gray.....	Clerk.....	Richmond, Virginia.....	182 50
E. W. Bayley.....	Deputy collector and inspector.....	Cherrystone, Virginia.....	200 00
William E. Hamilton.....	Inspector, weigher, gauger, and measurer.....	Richmond, Virginia.....	182 50
Frank H. Hall.....	do.....	Newbern, North Carolina.....	547 50
Charles H. Groves.....	Deputy collector.....	Charleston, South Carolina.....	200 00
Nathaniel Levin.....	Auditor and clerk.....	do.....	200 00
Charles L. Beecher.....	Clerk.....	do.....	100 00
John Timberlake.....	Cashier.....	New Orleans, Louisiana.....	200 00
J. D. Crawford.....	Entry clerk.....	do.....	200 00
J. Strevell.....	Clerk.....	do.....	200 00
W. O. Brown.....	do.....	do.....	500 00
Otis Remick.....	do.....	do.....	600 00
Philo Hard.....	do.....	do.....	500 00
John S. Marsh.....	do.....	do.....	400 00
Theodore Bonx.....	do.....	do.....	300 00
C. A. Harrison.....	do.....	do.....	800 00
C. O. J. Stevens.....	do.....	do.....	700 00
Henry Gormly.....	do.....	do.....	400 00
P. B. Earhart.....	do.....	do.....	880 00
Theodore Meeks.....	do.....	do.....	400 00
L. A. Foucher.....	do.....	do.....	100 00
D. S. Baker.....	do.....	do.....	100 00
Philip Winfree.....	do.....	do.....	400 00
Victor Lirandius.....	do.....	do.....	500 00
A. J. Young.....	do.....	do.....	100 00
H. F. Hardy.....	do.....	do.....	100 00
J. S. Nisson.....	do.....	do.....	100 00
E. A. Vansickle.....	do.....	do.....	100 00

CUSTOM-HOUSE OFFICERS.

Yellow Fever and Cholera Epidemics in New Orleans

Almost every summer, these two diseases struck New Orleans and killed thousands of people. In his 1940 book about his museum in Salt Lake City, Charles Strevell said his parents left New Orleans because of the yellow fever and cholera epidemics.

In this same book, Charles Strevell recounted that President Lincoln appointed his father as Cashier of Customs at New Orleans. When his parents left for New Orleans, he and his sister were placed in the care of Reverend and Mrs. Adam Johnston in Pontiac.

Civil War Ends

The Civil War effectively ended on April 9, 1865, when Robert E. Lee surrendered the last major Confederate army to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse.

Lincoln Assassinated in 1865

Less than one week after the Civil War ended, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth on April 15, 1865, at the Petersen House in Washington, D.C. President Lincoln was 56 years of age when he died.

Jason W. Strevell Elected to Illinois State Senator in 1868

Mr. Strevell was then elected to serve one term as an Illinois State Senator in 1868. In that year, Jason W. Strevell was 36, stepson Charles Nettleton was 10 and stepson John Nettleton was 23.

Mr. Strevell was very active in the Illinois State Senate in 1869 per the book *Journal of the Senate of the Twenty-Sixth General Assembly of the State of Illinois* at their regular session begun and held at Springfield, January 4, 1869. This book was printed in 1869 at Springfield by the Illinois Journal Printing Office. A digital PDF copy of this book can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/k75m8ab8.

During his term as an Illinois State Senator from 1868 to 1872, stepson Charles Nettleton served as a page in the Illinois State Senate. Sometime before he died, C. N. Strevell hand-wrote a biography he titled *Life*. A complete copy of this biography is shown later in this book.

In this biography, C. N. Strevell reported that he was a page for Lieutenant Governor Dougherty when he was 11 years of age. Mr. Strevell reported that he then became a page for Lieutenant Governor Early before the age of 13. Mr. Strevell also recounted that he earned more money as a page than his father, Jason Strevell, earned as an Illinois State Senator. When the legislature was in session, Charles N. Strevell was paid \$3.00 a day working as a page. His father, State Senator Jason Strevell was only paid \$2.50 per day.

In this same biography document, C. N. Strevell recounted that his name was changed from Charles Nettleton to Charles Nettleton Strevell when he was eight years of age. Since he was born in 1858, this name change occurred in 1866. No record could be found from the 1866 Illinois State Legislature documenting this name change.

John Nettleton's Narrow Escape from Death in 1869

John H. Nettleton was the son of Zelus H. Nettleton and the stepson of Jason W. Strevell. In 1869, John Nettleton was living in Pontiac and was 20 years of age.

The 1909 Livingston County History Book tells the tale of how John Nettleton barely escaped being murdered by the Sioux in Nebraska.

About this time there arrived in Pontiac, Nelson Buck, who came from near Bloomington. Mr. Buck was a widower with three children, and shortly after his coming, was married to the widow of Augustus Fellows. Mr. Buck was a

man of many interesting peculiarities and was always first and foremost in everything that went for the upbuilding of the town. He was a surveyor and was elected to that position for several terms. Mr. Buck was one of the first trustees of the village of Pontiac, organized in 1856, and was the leading force which brought about the incorporation. He was a ready writer for the press in the early days of Pontiac, and many of the older residents now living remember the caustic articles printed over his signature.

In 1869, while engaged in writing the first history of the county, he received an appointment as surveyor from the United States government, with orders to proceed at once to the territory of Nebraska. The history was about one-fifth completed when he left for the west. Before leaving for the west Mr. Buck inserted an advertisement in one of the local papers for eight young men to accompany him on the trip, assuring them of plenty of sport, with an excellent chance to see the country. The opportunity afforded by the expedition for exploring the wilds of western Nebraska attracted the attention of several of the more adventurous young men of this place, who made application to Mr. Buck for employment, and were enrolled as members of the party, and on the 29th day of June, 1869, Mr. Buck, Frank McFarland, Buxton McGregor, John Nettleton, Will McCulloch and James Sager started from Pontiac for the field of their labors.

Frank McFarland was the son of a merchant tailor who resided here at that time, while Buxton McGregor still resides here, and is the only living member of the party. Will McCulloch was the son of the late Mrs. D. J. Taylor and a brother of Mrs. Emma Voight who taught in the public schools of Pontiac for several years, John Nettleton was the son of the late Mrs. J. W. Strevell of Miles City, Montana, and well known among the old settlers of Pontiac. James Sager was a farmer boy and resided with his folks in Owego Township. None of these young men were over seventeen years of age.

They left Pontiac and proceeded to Council Bluffs, Iowa, by rail, and from that point proceeded to a point opposite Piattsmouth, Neb., where they crossed the Missouri river. At Piattsmouth, they were joined by six others and proceeded without interruption to Fort Kearney, Neb., where they were to receive a military escort.

While at Fort Kearney, Mr. Buck was cautioned not to proceed further by the commandant, Colonel Pollock, who stated that the country was full of Indians on the warpath and that they had been engaged but a few days previous by a troop of cavalry from the fort. After waiting for several days for the escort and not procuring one, Mr. Buck decided to push forward, and accordingly left the fort with his party.

After journeying two days westward and encountering many of the Sioux tribe, Mr. Buck became alarmed and sent young McGregor and Nettleton back to Fort Kearney with a request to the Colonel that he send an escort at once. The boys returned to the fort and delivered the message, and as no troops were forthcoming decided to remain until one was provided.

No troops being available the escort was not provided and McGregor and Nettleton left the fort with their faces turned toward the east and worked their way back to Pontiac. having seen all the Indians they desired.

The surveying party, ten in number, left Fort Kearney about the middle of July, and as nothing had been heard of them an expedition from North Platte headed by Lieutenant Haskins, U. S. A., with William P. Cody (Buffalo Bill) as a scout, left that place the first of October in search of them.

On the 10th of October, Lieutenant Haskins reported to his superior of having found about thirty miles southeast of McPherson, where Mr. Buck's party was supposed to be, two tripods, a camp and camp equipage, and some canned fruits. The camp had the appearance of being deserted. He also saw some parts of a wagon. Not long after this, a band of Indians were captured, and it was admitted by them that they had a fight with a party at the point above mentioned; that it was a desperate one and that the last to fall was a tall man, who was in charge of the party.

The Indians denied that they burned the bodies of the men, but careful search by expeditions sent out in search of the missing party failed to find them, and as not one of them ever returned or has since been heard of, it was generally supposed at the time that after killing every member of the gallant little band, their bodies were disposed of by the Indians in a manner peculiar to their own.

Note that whomever wrote this story for the 1909 Volume Two history book stretched the truth a little bit with the statement that none of the boys were over the age of seventeen. John Nettleton was 20 years of age when the party left Pontiac for Nebraska.

John H. Nettleton Marries Olive Potter in 1870

John, son of Zelus Nettleton, married Olive Potter in Pontiac in 1870. Olive was the daughter of Horace A. Potter (1818-1894) and Harriet Thomas (1820-1901).

John was 21 and Olive was 17 years of age when they married. They had three children. Wilson H. Nettleton was born in 1870. Elizabeth K. Nettleton was born in 1878. Charles S. Nettleton was born in 1885.

1870 U.S. Census

In this Census, John Nettleton was 21 years of age and lived in Pontiac, Illinois. His birthplace was Michigan. John's occupation was farmer and he was living with his wife, Olive Potter, age 18. John reported that he owned \$5,000 worth of real estate. This would be equivalent to \$111,000 in today's dollars.

In this same census, Jason W. Strevell lived in Pontiac, Illinois. Jason was 38 years of age and his birthplace was New York. His occupation was State Senator. His wife Elizabeth Strevell lived with him. Children living in the household were Charles Strevell, age 12, and Helen Strevell, age eight.

Jason reported that he owned \$10,000 worth of personal estate and \$26,500 of real estate. This total net worth of \$36,500 would be equivalent to \$810,00 in today's dollars.

State Senator Strevell Introduces Bill to Have New Boys Reformatory Built in Pontiac, Illinois in 1871

The February 27, 1871, Pantagraph reported that in the Illinois Senate, Mr. Strevell introduced an appropriation bill to fund a new Reform School. The article recounted that Strevell's proposal was referred to the Finance Committee in the Senate.

In June of 1871, the first six young men, convicted of stealing horses in Peoria, arrived at the Illinois Boys Reformatory School in Pontiac. The Boys Reformatory eventually became the current Pontiac Correctional Center. This facility has been a major employer of Livingston County citizens for 150 years.

John Nettleton Sues His Stepfather in 1872

According to an October 13, 2011, Pontiac Daily Leader article, John Nettleton sued his stepfather, Jason Strevell in 1872.

John was age 7 when his father died and was age 10 when Abraham Lincoln visited the home. In addition to that house, Zelus Nettleton had owned a lot of farmland and Jason Strevell also assumed ownership of that land.

However, in 1872 he filed suit in Livingston County as the oldest son and rightful owner of the farmland,” Collins Miller said, referring to copies of docket pages stemming from the suit which he obtained from the courthouse. “He was granted ownership of the land, plus was given a monetary settlement for a share of the crops raised and sold over those years.

A copy of the six pages of the lawsuit can be accessed at [Tinyurl.com/wndhmvx3](https://tinyurl.com/wndhmvx3).

CHAPTER 10

1873 to 1877

Jason Strevell Helps Raise Money for A. J. Cropsey in Nebraska in 1874

In 1874, A. J. Cropsey was living in Lincoln, Nebraska. In 1874, swarms of Rocky Mountain locusts descended across the Great Plains, darkening the skies and eating up everything wherever they landed.

The December 18, 1874, edition of the Nebraska State Journal published a story about Pontiac, Illinois, sending money to Lincoln, Nebraska. The \$41 they sent in 1874 would be equal to \$1,017 in today's dollars.

CORRESPONDENCE

Pontiac, Ill., Sends Greeting to the Lincoln Aid Society

Pontiac, Ill., Nov. 28th, 1874

Hon. A. J. Cropsey

My Dear Sir:

At our thanksgiving service a collection was taken for the suffering of your State, amounting to the enclosed draft. Confiding in your knowledge of the wants of the people there, the undersigned, a committee appointed to give direction to the fund, have thought it most advisable to send it to you for disposal. Please do the best you can to make the little mite useful and acknowledge.

Yours very truly

J. W. Strevell

E. W. Capron

Geo. R. Beach

Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 17, 1874

Col. A. J. Cropsey

DEAR SIR—The Lincoln Aid and Relief Society take great pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of \$41 through you from the following committee: J. W. Strevell, E. W. Capron, Geo. R. Beach, thanksgiving offering, taken at Pontiac, Ill. Our Society will invest the amount and distribute proceeds to reach the greatest amount of good. With thanks to the donors for this commendable generosity, and yourself, we are yours,

L. A. & R. Society

H. H. Walsh, Secretary

Jason Strevell Appeared in Pantagraph Twice in 1875

The June 4, 1875, Pantagraph recounted that the Honorable J. W. Strevell had returned to Pontiac from Colorado.

The July 17, 1875, Pantagraph reported that Dr. James Grasier, of Wenona, last week purchased the farm owned by J. W. Strevell, just south of the city; at the remarkably moderate price of forty-six dollars per acre.

Forty-six dollars per acre in 1875 would be equivalent to \$1,175 per acre in today's dollars.

William Crawford Family Moves to Pontiac in 1875

In 1875, Elizabeth Crawford, daughter of William Crawford, was 19 years of age when she moved to Pontiac. Charles Nettleton Strevell was 17 years of age in 1875 and was living in Pontiac. Charles and Elizabeth began dating each other sometime after she moved to Pontiac in 1875.

Abraham Lincoln as William Crawford's Attorney

In his 1943 book titled *As I Recall Them*, Charles Strevell recounted that William T. Crawford was an early client of Lincoln's. When Mr. Crawford went to Springfield to consult with him about his land entry and after Lincoln had given his advice, he said, "Mr. Lincoln, how much do I owe you?" Lincoln replied, "You are just a young fellow trying to get a start out here, aren't you?" Placing his hand on Crawford's shoulder he said, "Well, you just go along and I hope that you are successful in obtaining your land."

The Battle of the Big Horn in 1876

The Battle of the Big Horn was fought about 150 miles southwest of Miles City, Montana. Wikipedia has a description of this famous battle.

George Armstrong Custer (December 5, 1839 – June 25, 1876) was a United States Army officer and cavalry commander in the American Civil War and the American Indian Wars.

Custer graduated from West Point in 1861 at the bottom of his class, but as the Civil War was just starting, trained officers were in immediate demand. He worked closely with General George B. McClellan and the future General Alfred Pleasonton, both of whom recognized his qualities as a cavalry leader, and he was promoted to brigadier general of volunteers at age 23.

Only a few days after his promotion, he fought at the Battle of Gettysburg, where he commanded the Michigan Cavalry Brigade and despite being

outnumbered, defeated J. E. B. Stuart's attack at what is now known as the East Cavalry Field. In 1864, he served in the Overland Campaign and in Philip Sheridan's army in the Shenandoah Valley, defeating Jubal Early at Cedar Creek. His division blocked the Army of Northern Virginia's final retreat and received the first flag of truce from the Confederates. He was present at Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

After the war, he was commissioned as a lieutenant colonel in the Regular Army and was sent west to fight in the Indian Wars. On June 25, 1876, while leading the 7th Cavalry Regiment at the Battle of the Little Bighorn in Montana Territory against a coalition of Native American tribes, he was killed along with every soldier of the five companies he led after splitting the regiment into three battalions. This action became romanticized as "Custer's Last Stand".



General Custer

Jason Strevell Gives Talk at Fairbury in 1876

The September 25, 1876, Pantagraph reported about the talk that Jason Strevell gave in Fairbury.

According to announcement the Honorable J. W. Strevell, of Pontiac, spoke to a small but appreciative audience at Fairbury Hall Friday evening. Strevell is sound on the goose, and his finance argument was the best that has yet been presented. Saturday night, the Honorable C. C. Strawn, a Peter Cooperite, proposes to answer Strevell. The answer will perhaps be equal to that of the famous Billy, who picked up the gauntlet that Cullom dropped, although Billy stayed in town all night, but in private quarters at the hotel.

1876 Presidential Election

This election was one of the most contentious presidential elections in U.S. history. Rutherford B. Hayes was the Republican candidate and Samuel Tilden was the Democrat candidate.

Tilden as first appeared to have won the election, but there were questions about the results in the states of Florida, Louisiana, Oregon, and [South Carolina](#). Congress was unable to solve the controversy, so they appointed an Electoral Commission to resolve the election. The Electoral Commission eventually decided that Rutherford B. Hayes was the winner.

Strevell Was Member of Electoral College That Elected Hayes

Jason Strevell was a member of the Illinois Republican contingent that voted in the Electoral College for Hayes.

Apparently, there was some controversy prior to the election with respect to who the correct members of the Electoral College were in Illinois. The November 3, 1876, edition of the Pantagraph published an article about this controversy.

Electoral Ticket

There have been whispers of attempts at circulating false tickets, with the names of a part of the Republican electors omitted and Tilden electors substituted. The following is the true Republican Electoral Ticket:

Presidential Electors

8th District—J. W. Strevell

Jason Strevell Helped Nominate Judge in 1877

The July 18, 1877 issue of the Pantagraph recounted that Mr. Strevell was the Chairman of the group of lawyers who nominated judges to be on the ballot.

THE THIRD JUDGE.

It seems altogether probable That Hon. Franklin Blades Is the Child of Fortune.

A convention was held yesterday at Chenoa, composed of the delegates appointed by the bars of McLean, Livingston, Kankakee, Iroquois, and Ford counties, to nominate a lawyer's candidate for the third judgeship in the 11th district, composed of the above names counties.

All the counties named were represented, although Kankakee and Ford had only partial delegations. Mr. E. M. Prince of McLean county was temporary chairman, and Mr. Strevell, of Livingston, permanent chairman. The result of the deliberations of the convention was that Hon. Franklin Blades of Watseka was nominated. The name of Mr. James S. Ewing of McLean county, was not presented. The convention, although somewhat turbulent at times, was quite harmonious.

Miles City, Montana, Founded in 1877

Wikipedia has an account of how this town was established.

After the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, the U.S. Army created forts in eastern Montana, including one where the north-flowing Tongue River flowed into the east-flowing Yellowstone River. The first fort was known as the Tongue River Cantonment or the Tongue River Barracks and was founded on August 27, 1876. A second, permanent fort was constructed on higher ground two miles to the west of the mouth of the Tongue and this became Fort Keogh.

Fort Keogh (named after Captain Myles Keogh, one of the battle dead, whose horse, Comanche, was the lone survivor of Custer's command) started as a few rough winter cabins, but grew into a moderate sized western fort, from which its commander, General Nelson A. Miles, effectively brought the remaining "uncontrolled" Native Americans into subjugation during the last decade of the 1800s.

Nelson Miles said that "whiskey caused him more trouble than the Indians" and, after tiring of drunken soldiers causing problems during the winter campaign, evicted the sutlers who provided "liquid stock" in the spring of 1877. Moving two miles due east of the Tongue River Cantonment, these early merchants founded the first Miles City. Although fondly referred to as "Milestown," the first post office and first official plat both called the town

"Miles City." When the old cantonment moved two miles west, the town literally picked up and followed, moving to the current site. The last occupants of Old Miles City stayed on until 1900 but the new community was the one that grew.

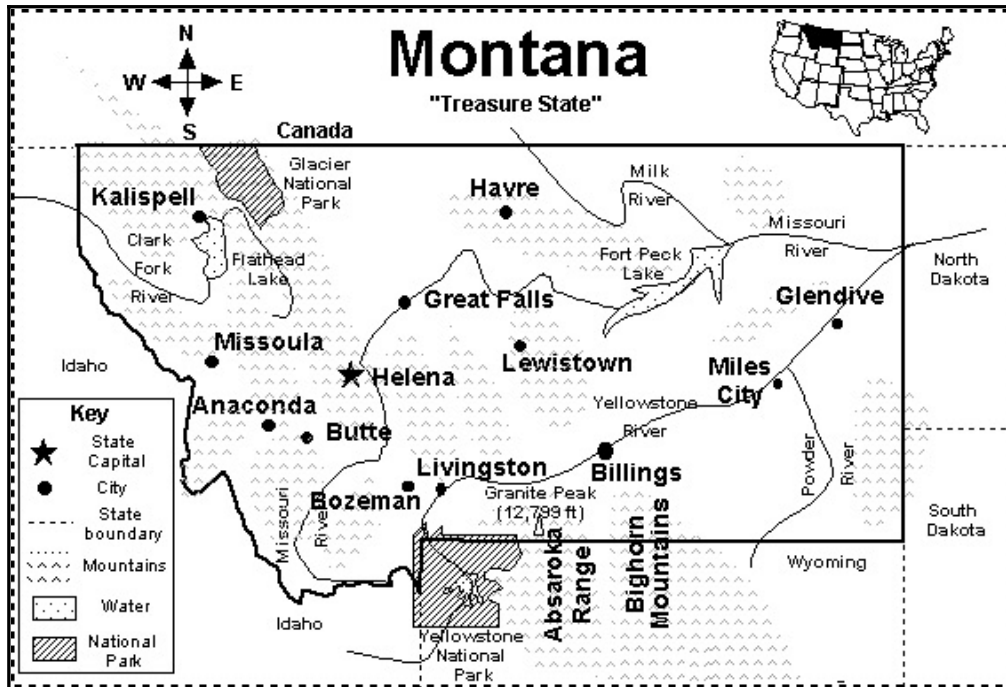
Before the town itself was founded, George Miles, the nephew of General Miles, who had accompanied his uncle on the western expedition and served in the quartermaster's office, bought a herd of sheep, the first of many commercial enterprises in his involvement with the core founders of the town.

Livestock speculation brought thousands of cattle to the open ranges in the late 1880s, the railroad was extended through the area, and Texas drove numerous cattle to Miles City to fatten them on free grass and move them to where they could be loaded on trains bound for the slaughterhouses in Chicago (Milwaukee Railroad).

The City of Miles City was incorporated in 1887 and the first mayor was Eugene Henry "Skew" Johnson (born July 27, 1846, in Clarksville, Arkansas, died July 31, 1919, in Miles City, Montana) who served for one term.

Miles City established a municipal electric utility around 1887 and it was a source of civic pride (as any city would have towards its own utilities) until a traveling employee of Minnesota Northern Power (predecessor of MDU Resources Group, Inc.) told the city council "the emperor has no clothes;" i.e., the system was far less efficient and in worse shape than they thought. The city council eventually put the question to the voters who instructed the city to sell the utility. By this time, the people with the Montana Power Company (now NorthWestern Energy's Montana division) became aware of this and were soon locked in an epic battle with Minnesota Northern over the franchise. A franchise election was held to determine who would serve Miles City on June 28, 1927. Minnesota Northern won by a scant 16 votes.

Miles City experienced rapid growth until the 1920s and 1930s, but became overshadowed by the upstart upriver town of Billings, which was at the cross roads of transportation routes. Billings became a banking center, oil refining center, and medical service center and is now the largest city in the state.



CHAPTER 11

1878 to 1881

Two References to Jason Strevell in 1878 Pantagraph

The June 21, 1878 Pantagraph reported that Mr. Strevell made a hunting trip to Montana.

PONTIAC

Messrs. Strevell, Harding, and Stevens soon start for a hunting trip into the Yellowstone country.

Jason Strevell was 46 years of age in 1878.

The August 6, 1878, Pantagraph reported that Judge Strevell and his wife returned to Pontiac from their Colorado trip.

Judge Strevell and wife returned from their Colorado trip.

Jason Strevell Family Moves from Pontiac to Miles City, Montana, in 1879

The May 30, 1879 Pantagraph reported that Jason Strevell went to Montana for three weeks.

Hon. J. W. Strevell and Isaac Ames, of Streator, started for the Yellowstone country this morning. They go from here to Bismarck, and there take a boat for Fort Stephenson. They will be absent some three weeks.

The September 19, 1879 Pantagraph reported that Jason Strevell bought an inventory of hardware to take with him to Montana. Mr. Strevell had experience running a hardware store in Pontiac and likely was planning on opening a hardware store in Miles City, Montana.

The hardware belonging to J. Estes has been sold to J. W. Strevell, who will take it to Montana with him.

There are at least two reference sources that recount that the Jason Strevell family moved from Pontiac to Miles City, Montana in 1879. The first reference is an 1892 biography which appeared in the Yellowstone Journal newspaper. The second reference was the obituary for Jason Strevell that was printed in the 1902 Presbyterian Church publication.

The Jason Strevell family moved to Montana just three years after Custer's Last Stand battle and two years after Miles City, Montana, was founded.

In 1879, Charles Nettleton Strevell was 21 years of age. In his 1943 book titled *As I Recall Them*, Charles Strevell recounted that one of the reasons his family moved to Montana was because of his poor health.

Prior to the 1880s, Livingston County was mostly swampland. This water attracted mosquitoes and many citizens suffered from malaria. The introduction of clay field tile drained the swamps and eliminated the malaria problem. Several families in the area moved out west prior to the introduction of field tile to improve their health.

Strevells Help Form Presbyterian Church in Miles City, Montana

The 1907 book titled *The Pioneer Work of the Presbyterian Church in Montana* contains information about the Strevells when they arrived in Montana.

THE EVOLUTION OF A PIONEER CHURCH—MILES CITY.

The first part of this sketch of the Miles City Presbyterian Church is from an article published in the *Interior*, January 1, 1903, probably written by Rev. Edward McCullough Calvin, pastor of the church from April, 1897 to July 1, 1905.

Into this typical frontier town the Presbyterian Church came as the religious pioneer in January, 1879. An upper room over a Jewish clothing store, with no furniture but a stove, accommodated the first congregation. Nail kegs and boards were used for pews and a small organ was found for the service. A Sunday-school was then organized with Mr. George M. Miles as superintendent. He had recently arrived from Massachusetts to be the civilian clerk of his uncle, General Nelson A. Miles, in command at Fort Keogh, located here. Mr. Miles is still the superintendent,—the only one the school has ever cared to have. No one could be more faithful and devoted. After serving for 25 years he was presented with a silver loving cup.

The church organization was effected October 20th, 1880, with 13 members, by Rev. W. L. Austin, who supplied the pulpit until May of the following year. Judge J. W. Strevell and Mr. M. G. Maples were elected as the first elders. Judge Strevell served in this office until his death in 1903.

He always took an active part in church work, frequently represented the church in the meetings of Presbytery and was thrice a commissioner to the General Assembly.

For 23 years the Miles City Church was an outpost of the Presbyterian Church, being the only Presbyterian organization in a stretch of 582 miles along the main line of the Northern Pacific Railway, from Bozeman, Montana, to Mandan, N. D., until the organization at Billings in 1903.

In 1899 Mrs. J. W. Strevell published a book containing nearly one hundred short religious poems, dedicated "To the Memory of my Beloved Daughter, Helen Strevell Miles."

The poem read at the Fifteenth Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church of Miles City is so closely in sympathy with the subject of pioneer religious work that we will quote it in part.

OUR EARLY CHURCH.

On uncongenial soil a tender plant appeared,
 Born of the night, scarce seen, so small and low,
Not by refreshing stream, nor meadow green,
 But on the desert. Can it live and grow?

Few laborers there were to till the soil,
 Few toilers who with ceaseless care
Must guard its growth, and shield from harm and wrong,
 Until its leaves of healing rise in air.

The tender plant has grown a goodly tree,
 Its branches tending upward toward the sky.
A Master hand has planted and will keep,
 When troubles rise His help is ever nigh.

Our Earthly Church. We love thy sacred walls,
 We love the memories that cluster round
 Of some departed, some far hence removed,
Of other newer friends, and later found.

Our Father, Helper, Friend, we look to Thee,
 Spread Thou Thy wings of love our spirits o'er,
Destroy the tempter's power and bring us to
 A glad reunion on the other Shore.



THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MILES CITY.

1. Rev. Edward M. Calvin.
2. Elder Jason W. Strevell.*
3. Mrs. J. W. Strevell.**
4. Elder George M. Miles.

5. Mrs. Helen Strevell-Miles.***

*Deceased Feb. 27, 1903.

**Deceased July 11, 1902.

***Deceased July 11, 1887.

Early Days of Charles N. Strevell's Hardware Store

A web site utilized the 1957 book titled *A History of Montana* to write a story about the early days of Charles Strevell's hardware store in Miles City. This web site can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/3a8ha9hv. An excerpt of this article is shown below.

MILES & ULMER COMPANY of Miles City has the distinction of being the only business in eastern Montana founded prior to the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad and still in the active service of the public. The following outline of its history is the record of the steady and substantial growth of an organization which has been an integral part of the business and community life of Miles City for more than three-quarters of a century. From the first log store building of 1879 to the modern and finely appointed building of today is a far cry, but in each of the intervening years Miles & Ulmer has been in constant touch with the needs and opportunities in its field, and has contributed its full share of stability and strength to the business fabric of the state. So much of the color and intimate personal background of the area is written into the carefully kept records that a social historian would find them a mine of absorbing data, but this narrative confines itself to the facts of a notable firm's career in commerce.

The firm was first known as Miles & Strevell, when it was founded in the winter of 1879. Earlier that year a young man named Charley Strevell arrived from Pontiac, Illinois. His cousin, George M. Miles, was already established there, and held a position as paymaster's clerk at old Fort Keogh. The two decided to enter the hardware business, and to that end built a log store with a front of lumber and glass. On the roof was a large sign reading "Hardware and Stoves." Partner Strevell later acknowledged that the two young men had been rather "nervy" to set up in competition with such well-established firms as Broadwater Hubble and A. R. Ninninger, each of which was capitalized at about a quarter of a million dollars. All stock in trade arrived either by ox team, or by river steamer up the Yellowstone. On occasion, a curious potential customer would watch a delivery being made to the new hardware store, spot something he wanted, and buy it before it had even been unpacked. The Northern Pacific

Railroad arrived in 1881, in the second year of the firm's existence. There were early adversities in the form of a flood (1880) and a fire (1884). In the fire, the building and stock of goods were a complete loss, but the building was insured.

The year 1884 marked another historic event in the annals of the company, the partnership of Miles, Strevell & Ulmer being formed. A vivid description of the store in the early days of the triumvirate is contained in the company record.

"From the ceiling hung pots, kettles, coffee pots, water canteens on big hooks. Scores of birdcages for bird fanciers seemed more prevalent then than now; and elaborate parlor hanging lamps all chastely draped in mosquito netting to keep flies off the painted china bosom of the shade. Also on the ceiling were straps for harnesses, and wire clothesline.

A customer coming in would give more attention to Miles, Strevell and Ulmer's ceiling than most tourists do to the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, and point, and say, 'I want this.' The walls were lined with drawers to the ceiling. High bicycles built for one were on the floor, so was a lawn mower, and an elaborate 'flush system' of a toilet and bearded Plumber Parmley dancing in close attendance on the plumbing supplies for sale. Across the radiator (the building was heated by steam, boiler holding forth in the basement) were pelts. General arrangement is hardware to the left, china to the right. This hold true today as then."

Regarding the above reference to plumbing, the articles of incorporation in 1905 show that the firm was qualified to install as well as sell plumbing fixtures, and they also sold stoves, roofing, spouting, steamfitting equipment, building materials and home furnishings. It was the first firm in town to stock farm machinery, and they also carried spring wagons, camp tender's wagons and sheep wagons.

It was on March 8, 1905, that Miles & Ulmer Company was incorporated, under its present name. George M. Miles was president and George Henry Ulmer vice

president, Jason D. Miles treasurer. Founding partner Charley Strevell was not in the new organization, as he had moved to Salt Lake. In 1917 the capitalization was raised from thirty thousand dollars to one hundred and fifty thousand. The original articles of incorporation ran for twenty years, and in 1929 Miles and Ulmer Company was reincorporated, for a period of forty years, with Marion (Ulmer) Brown and Wallace Ulmer sole owners.

1880 U.S. Census

In this Census, the Jason Strevell family lived in Miles City, Montana. Mr. Strevell reported his occupation as lawyer. The family members and their ages are shown below.

J. W. Strevell, age 45.

Elizabeth Strevell, age 45.

Charles N. Strevell, age 22.

Helen Strevell, age 18.

In this same Census, John Nettleton, son of Zelus Nettleton, lived in Joliet, Illinois, with his wife Olive Nettleton. Mr. John Nettleton's birthplace was Michigan. John's occupation was a carpenter. John was 30 and Olive was 27 years of age when this census was taken. Living with them was their son, Wilson H. Nettleton, age nine, and their daughter, Lizzie K. Nettleton, age one.

Jason Strevell Appointed to Probate Judge in 1880 in Montana

The June 26, 1880, issue of the Weekly Yellowstone Journal published a story about Judge Strevell.

A new probate judge is to be elected this fall. Judge McBride and Judge Strevell, will neither, probably care for the position when the time expires for which they were appointed, and a candidate for this important office will be voted for this fall, and it is well to look thoroughly before we leap.

Apparently Jason Strevell had been appointed to be a Montana Judge prior to this date.

Helen Strevell Marries George Miles in 1881 in Wyoming

Helen moved from Pontiac to Miles City, Montana, with her parents in 1879. At some point, she started dating George Miles. As noted above in the Wikipedia description of the founding of Miles City, George was the nephew of General Miles.

Before the town itself was founded, George Miles, the nephew of General Miles, who had accompanied his uncle on the western expedition and served in the quartermasters office, bought a herd of sheep, the first of many commercial enterprises in his involvement with the core founders of the town.

The January 21, 1881, issue of the Pantagraph published the following wedding notice.

Miss Helen Strevell, daughter of Judge Strevell, formerly of Pontiac, was married a few days ago to Mr. George Miles, near Fort Keogh, Wyoming.

George Miles was 26 and Helen Strevell was 20 years of age when they married. Jason Daniel Miles, the only child born to George and Helen Miles, was born March 11, 1882, in Miles City.

Charles Nettleton Strevell Recounts Early Days in Miles City

Likely written in the latter years of his life, Charles N. Strevell wrote a hand-written recollection of his early days in Illinois and Miles City. Mr. Strevell filed a copy of this four page document with the University of Utah. A transcribed copy of his recollections is shown below. This handwritten account was not very legible and there are likely some errors in the typed transcription. The original handwritten sheets can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/yeytupze.

Life

Born in Illinois in 1858, sat on Lincoln's lap before two years of age, name changed by special act of legislature of Illinois when eight, marched with Grant Farmers in 1868. Lieutenant Governor Daugherty's page before eleven, and page for Lieutenant Governor Early before thirteen, acquainted with members of Illinois State Senate, also Gannon Paliccor, and Senator Cullom, adopted son of State Senator, who was drawing \$2.50 per day when legislature was in session, while a page I was paid \$3.00 per day.

Year was 13, caught onto box car in mining freight train, swung in between cars but held on, leg striking corner of car, climbed to top and held on to run way, brakeman hurried back to where I was, nursed cut leg without telling family, afraid to tell, First time I flirted with death.

Between fifteen and sixteen sick with typhus fever for months, so ill that death notice published in local paper, never strong, and handicapped for years. Plenty of ambition and when seventeen entered merchandising.

Broken in health, threatened with consumption, at twenty, advised by old time family physician to go west to a dry climate, family started for Montana, riding in covered wagon from Bismarck, North Dakota, over three hundred miles to Miles City, Montana, arriving sick and in makeshift bed on bottom of wagon box in fall of 1879, after months of rest and a Montana winter, again entered business with nephew of General Miles, who in meantime had married sister. Stock of good arrived next summer by boat on Yellowstone River. This was before the Northern Pacific had reached eastern Montana.

The business established at that time is the only one still going on after fifty years.

When the family consisting of father, mother, sister, and son (myself) arrived in this wild western town, there were 36 saloons, many gambling houses, dance halls, and almost every thing imaginable, to lure and rob the soldiers from the nearby post, which General Miles had established recently, the Custer Massacre had occurred only three years previously.

There were no churches, but following Sunday we attended Sunday school, where sister played an organ, so well that she soon after married the Superintendent of the Sunday school.

All this was new and strange to the family from Illinois. There were many Indians on the streets, besides Calamity Jane who arrived by stage from Deadwood, and who was drunk on the streets, yelling and cursing. Other diversions were the town crier, going about the business part of town, ringing a hand bell, and calling "Keno tonight Charlie Browns who boasted that the doors of his saloon and gambling house had never been locked.

Big nose George hung by vigilantes while officers were taking him to Bozeman, Bill Reese pounding up his "monian" who told an inquiring friend, Yes I did, you've just got to break em up, once in a while, to keep em in line," Bill was a dance hall proprietor, and no doubt knew from long experience.

After the coming of the Northern Pacific Railroad, many new settlers came into the country and conditions changed rapidly.

Cattlemen brought in herds in great numbers, father joined a Cape Cod Sea Captain and the "Circle Bar" ranch came into being, 110 miles from town, while at the ranch one summer, and with Capt and Cowboys watching a professional "Horse Wrangler" braking horses a most vicious one was finally saddled, bridled and mounted. If you ever saw a bucking bronc, "surfish" and go through every known act to dismount the rider – you never saw one do any better work than this one did.

Finally putting head down started to run toward where we were standing, of course we ran as fast as the bronc and as we just made the fence.....the pony wheeled and ran toward a creek bank going over, breaking riders leg besides being badly bruised. Pony's leg broken.

Charles Nettleton Strevell Marries Elizabeth Crawford in 1881

Charles N. Strevell, adopted son of Jason Strevell, returned to Pontiac from Montana and married Elizabeth Crawford in 1881. Charles was 23 and Elizabeth was 25 years of age when they married.

Elizabeth's father was a pioneering settler of Central Illinois per his biography in the 1900 history book.

WILLIAM T. CRAWFORD

William T. Crawford, a prominent horse dealer, who has since 1875 been an active factor in the business life of Pontiac, Illinois, was born in New York City October 13, 1832, and is a son of Andrew and Elizabeth (Turner) Crawford, the former a native of Ireland, the latter of New York, where their marriage was celebrated, the father having come to this county when a young man.

Meeting with business reverses in the metropolis, he removed to Harrison county, Ohio, where he took up land commenced life anew in very limited circumstances. Though the country where he was settled was hilly and stony and covered with a heavy growth of timber, he steadily prospered, and by hard work, good management and close economy he became possessed of considerable land, being quite well off at the time of his death, which occurred in November, 1889. The mother died on the old home farm in 1897. Both were faithful members of the Methodist Episcopal church and were highly esteemed in the community where they made their home.

The subject of this sketch began his education in the schools of New York City, but was only eight years old when the family removed to Ohio. The school house nearest his father's home was two miles distance and the path lay through the woods. His mother went with him the first day, carrying a hatchet, with which she marked the trees that he might find his way home again at night. The school proved quite different from the one he had attended in the city, but he managed to acquire a good practical education. On leaving home, in 1854, at the age of twenty-one years, he went to Scott county, Iowa, and spent one year on a farm some twenty miles west of Davenport.


Mr. Crawford then returned home and was married, February 14, 1856, to Miss Sarah Johnston, daughter of Andrew Johnston, who was of Scotch-Irish ancestry, and to them have been born six children, namely; Elizabeth, now the wife of Charles Strevelle, of Salt Lake City, Utah; George A., who is in business with his father and has served as alderman in Pontiac; Ada, wife of Albert Dolde; Elmer, a resident of Montana; William, who has been connected with the National Bank of Pontiac for some years; and Mande, at home.

In the spring of 1856, a short time after his marriage, Mr. Crawford moved to Bloomington, Illinois, where he followed farming for three years, and then bought a farm in Tazewell county, which he operated six years. His next home

was a farm northwest of Bloomington, on which was laid out the town of Yuton, and on selling that place he moved to Bloomington, where he was engaged in the horse and cattle business for a number of years, becoming a very extensive shipper of cattle and hogs. He was among the first from that city to send cattle to the Union stockyards in Chicago to be sold on commission, and was the first to ship horses there for that purpose. He owned the first carload of horses ever put in the old brick barn known as the Cooper barn, and has handled those animals on quite an extensive scale ever since. He buys mainly in Iowa and Montana, and sells from three to five hundred western horses every year, dealing in draft horses and fine drivers. No one in this section handles as many as the Crawford's, father and son, and they have met with most excellent success.

Although he has traveled so extensively in the interests of his business and been brought in contact with all classes of people, Mr. Crawford has never tasted intoxicating drinks, and has led a most exemplary life, commanding he respect and confidence of all who knew him. He has never taken an active part in politics, preferring to give his undivided attention to his business interests.

Copy of Marriage License for Charles and Lizzie Strevell

MARRIAGE LICENSE.	
STATE OF ILLINOIS	
LIVINGSTON COUNTY.	
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS,	
To any Person Legally Authorized to Solemnize Marriage, Greeting:	
MARRIAGE MAY BE CELEBRATED BETWEEN	
Mr. Charles A. Strevell	of Meils City
County of Custer	and State of Montana
of the age of 22	years, and
Miss Lizzie Crawford	of Pontiac
County of Livingston	and State of Illinois
of the age of 22	years, the
of the said	having
given	assent to said Marriage. GENEALOGICAL PURPOSES ONLY
	WITNESS, ALVIN WAIT, Clerk of the County
	Court of said County, and the seal thereof, at my office in
	Pontiac, in said County, this 12 th
	day of April A. D. 1881
	Alvin Wait
	Clerk of the County Court.
By	Deputy.
STATE OF ILLINOIS, } ss. It is HEREBY CERTIFIED, That on the 12 th day of	
LIVINGSTON COUNTY.	April A. D. 1881, at Pontiac Livingston County, Illinois,
the undersigned, a Minister of the Gospel	did join in Marriage
Mr. Charles A. Strevell	and Miss Lizzie Crawford
agreeable to the authority given in the above license.	
J. B. Little [SEAL.]	
Independent-Blade Print, Fairbury.	

Honeymoon Adventure

In his 1943 book titled *As I Recall Them*, Charles N. Strevell recounted an interesting experience he had on his honeymoon trip from Pontiac back to Miles City, Montana.

After several days in the city, visiting friends and buying furnishings for the new home, we began the long journey westward, stopping a day at Lake City, Minnesota with my mother's father, Dr. John Kelly and wife. We then went on to St. Paul, taking the Northern Pacific for Bismarck, Dakota.

SHERIDAN HOTEL

Registering at the Sheridan Hotel upon our arrival the clerk said, "We are pretty well filled and I'll have to double you up." I replied, "You had better look at the register again; you will see that we are pretty well doubled up ourselves."

It seems that at the first glance that he had not noticed that I had registered "Mr. and Mrs." He then gave us what we afterwards realized was the room reserved for newly-weds and which we later knew was located over the billiard rooms and saloon.

When, after midnight, a late-comer began "shooting up" the barroom, you may imagine what this meant to us. The following day we learned of the flood at Mandan and that the Northern Pacific would be unable to send trains to the "front" for several days.

Fortunately the newlyweds only had to spend one night above the rowdy saloon. Because of a flood, they had to spend several nights in Bismarck before the train resumed operation to Miles City, Montana. They found a woman who was a friend of Jason Strevell's. The newlyweds gladly accepted the woman's invitation to stay at her home until the train was back in operation.

CHAPTER 12

1882 to 1893

Jason Strevell and Adopted Son Charles Strevell Doing Well in Montana

The October 16, 1882, edition of the Pantagraph ran a story about how former Pontiac area residents were faring in Montana.

Edgar Camp came back from Billings, Montana, on Saturday, and spent several days here with his old friends. He sold his interest in the firm of Miles & Camp, some months ago to his partner, who in turn sold it to L. A. Babcock, of Pontiac. Edgar and his brother, Charlie, have recently bought out a firm in Billings, and are doing a large and lucrative trade.

He says that all the Pontiac people out there are doing splendidly. Dick Marks and Mr. Son are making money hand-over-fist, as the saying goes, and the Penney boys, of Odell, are doing finely.

He reports that Judge Strevell has a fine law practice at Miles City and is also heavily interested in stock raising, having an interest in a herd of nearly one thousand head of fat cattle. C. N. Strevell is at Miles City, and is doing an excellent business this fall in hardware and stoves. —Pontiac Sentinel

Jason Strevell ran a hardware store for many years in Pontiac. It is likely that his adopted son, Charles N. Strevell, learned the hardware business by working in his father's Pontiac store.

First and Only Child Born to Charles and Elizabeth Strevell in Montana

Also in 1882, Willie C. Nettleton Strevell was born in Miles City, Montana, to Charles Nettleton Strevell and Elizabeth Crawford. Charles was 23 and Elizabeth was 25 years of age when their only child was born.

Good Times for the Strevell Family in Miles City, Montana, in 1882

As noted above, George and Helen Miles had a son they named Jason Daniel Miles also in 1882.

Jason and Elizabeth Strevell became the grandparents of two boys in 1882 in Miles City.

Tragedy Strikes the Strevell Family in 1887

Helen Strevell, who married George Miles in 1881, died in Miles City at the age of 27. The July 23, 1887, Pantagraph published a death notice for Helen.

—The Yellowstone Journal of Miles City, Montana, under the date of the 15th, announces the death in that city of Mrs. Helen S. Miles, wife of George M. Miles, of that city. Mrs. Miles was a daughter of Judge and Mrs. J. W. Strevell, now of Miles City, formerly of Pontiac.

Judge Strevell was a member of the Illinois house of representatives in 1865, and of the state senate in 1869. He has numerous friends in this state, who will receive this intelligence with regret.

The remains of Mrs. Miles will ultimately be brought to Graceland cemetery, Chicago, for interment.

George Miles was 32 years of age when his wife Helen passed away. Their son, Jason Daniel Miles, was just five years of age when his mother died.

Mrs. Jason Strevell Confined to Her Room Starting in 1888

Elizabeth Kelly Strevell died in 1902. Several of her obituaries recount that she was confined to her bedroom the last 14 years of her life. Her affliction was a form of rheumatism, which first affected her limbs and joints, but slowly settled around her heart. Mrs. Jason Strevell was 60 years of age when she became an invalid. Jason Strevell was 56 years of age when his wife became bedridden.

Sanborn Insurance Maps

The Sanborn Insurance Company made maps of many cities in Illinois between approximately 1885 and 1930. These maps are an invaluable tool for historical research.

The Sanborn Insurance Company made six maps of Pontiac in the years 1888, 1892, 1898, 1903, 1910, and 1923.

Unfortunately, the 1888 Sanborn Map does not show any specific houses in the block the Strevell home was situated on. The map does note there were three framed and two brick houses in that block.

Tragedy Strikes the Strevell Family a Second Time in 1889

Willie Strevell, only child of Charles and Elizabeth Strevell, died at the age of six in January of 1889. The February 2, 1889, Chicago Tribune published death notices for both Willie Strevell and his sister Helen Miles that died in 1887.

MILES—The burial of Helen Strevell Miles, beloved wife of George M. Miles, will take place at Rosehill Cemetery Feb. 5 at 10:30 a.m. Friends invited. Train leaves Northwestern depot at 10 o'clock.

STREVELL—At Miles City, Mont., Jan 31, Willie Strevell, aged 7 years, only child of Charles N. and Lizzie Strevell. Friends will leave Northwestern depot for Rosehill Tuesday morning, Feb. 5, at 10 o'clock.

When Willie Strevell died in 1889, Charles Nettleton Strevell was 30 and Elizabeth Crawford Strevell was 33 years of age.

Why Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago?

At this time, it is unknown why the Strevell family chose this cemetery for burial. This cemetery was founded in 1859 and is one of the largest and oldest cemeteries in Chicago. It covers 350 acres.

It is also not known at this time what the Strevell family did with the body of Helen Strevell between the time she died in July of 1887 and when she was buried with Willie Strevell in February of 1889 in Chicago.

Rosehill Cemetery Document Showing Location of Strevell Family Graves in
Section 108

MEMORIAL RECORD

STREVELL

BURIAL
PLACE

N $\frac{1}{2}$ -24-108

Regular endowed care does not include floral decorations or their special care. These may be provided through our greenhouse department if desired.



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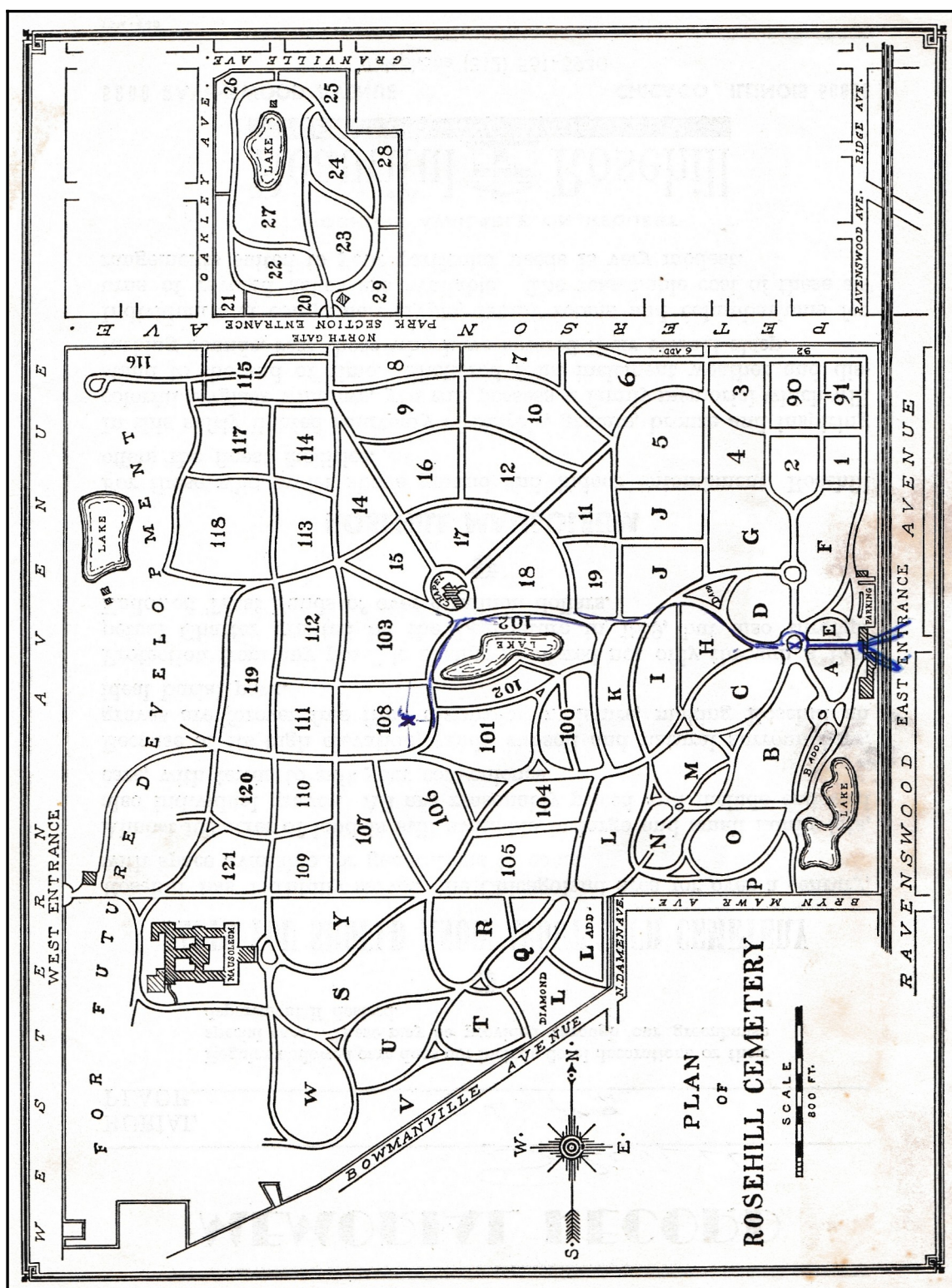
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1892 Sanborn Map Shows Strevell House in Same Configuration as in 2022

This map shows the house at 401 West Livingston Street in Pontiac, Illinois, in the same basic configuration as it is today. The small room at the northwest corner of the current house being used as a restroom was added sometime after 1892 if the Sanborn map is drawn accurately.



CHAPTER 13

1894 to 1897

The Charles Nettleton Strevell family moved from Miles City, Montana, to Ogden, Utah circa 1894-1895. Ogden is 40 miles north of Salt Lake City, Utah.

An election was held in 1894 to determine who the delegates would be to help write the constitution of the State of Utah in 1895.

Wikipedia recounts how the constitution of Utah was developed.

The Utah Constitution was drafted at a convention that opened on March 4, 1895 in Salt Lake City. The constitution was later approved by the citizens of Utah. It took 7 times to get the constitution approved by the government.

Utahns had drafted seven previous constitutions starting in 1849 as part of repeated attempts to become a state. However, Congress refused to admit Utah (or Deseret, as the territory originally wished to be called), until the Mormon settlers of Utah renounced polygamy.

The October 31, 1894, Salt Lake Tribune newspaper published an article with the biographies of the candidates to participate in the 1895 Utah state constitution convention. This article had biographies for both C. N. Strevell and A. J. Cropsey.

1894 Biography of State Convention Candidate A. J. Cropsey

Colonel A. J. Cropsey, whose title was won by four years of hard service from 1861 to 1865, at the head of the One Hundredth and Ninth Illinois, is another man whom the Republicans have named as one of the framers of the Constitution of the new State. Colonel Cropsey has been in Utah for nearly ten years, and during all that time he has been engaged in the general effort to build up the Territory and develop the resources. He is largely interested in Ogden, and is a thorough believer in her future. Colonel Cropsey is a man of education, a scholarly gentleman of ripe experience, an orator of reputation and a businessman. As a soldier his standing is shown by letters from such men as Benjamin Harrison, Carl Schurz, General Hooker, and others. Colonel Cropsey spent many years of his life in Nebraska, where he made a name that will endure long after he has passed away. In the early days in that State, in the days that stirred men's blood, he was prominent in the councils of his party. He has always been a Republican, and when in 1872 the Grant and Greeley campaign was waged, he was one of the most earnest supporters of Republicanism in the West. As a member of the Constitutional Convention he will devote to the duties devolving upon him the energy of a clear and well trained brain, and all the resources of a business man, and will make one of its most able members.

Error in A. J. Cropsey Biography

A. J. Cropsey was a Colonel in the Illinois 129th Infantry Company, not the Illinois 109th Infantry as stated in the biography.

1894 Biography of State Convention Candidate C. N. Strevell

Another thorough business man whom the Republicans nominated as one of their candidates for the Constitutional Convention is C. N. Strevell of the well-known hardware firm of Miles, Strevell & Ulmer. Mr. Strevell was born in Illinois in 1855, and ever since he was 17 years of age has been engaged in business. He is essentially a Western man, having been engaged in the hardware business in Montana and Utah since 1879, a period of fifteen years. Although closely attentive to business he finds much time to devote to reading and study, and is today one of the best posted men on political matters and Governmental affairs in Utah. His is a clear mind, carefully and systematically trained in the great school of practical experience, and as a consequence he possesses to a very marked degree that strength of character and general knowledge which give him a peculiar fitness for the duties which will come to him as one of the framers of the fundamental law of the new State. During his residence in Ogden, Mr. Strevell has made hosts of warm personal friends among all the people by his business-like methods, his scrupulous honesty and his uprightness of life and character. He is one of those men against whom not a word can be said either as to his personal qualities or his fitness for his office. In acting for the people in this important position he will always be found fighting for the best interest of the Territory, present and future, and nothing can swerve him from that right. He is one of the men to whom the people of the Territory can pin their faith without fear of being betrayed.

C. N. Strevell and A. J. Cropsey Old Friends from Illinois

As noted earlier, A. J. Cropsey knew Jason Strevell back when Mr. Cropsey lived in Fairbury and Mr. Strevell lived in Pontiac. Mr. Cropsey also likely met Charles Nettleton Strevell, son of Jason Strevell, when they all lived in Livingston County.

Charles and Elizabeth Strevell Move to Utah in 1894-1895 Era

Elizabeth Crawford Strevell died in on March 13, 1950, in Salt Lake City. Her obituary in the March 11, 1950 Deseret News recounted that they moved to Ogden, Utah in 1895.

Mrs. Strevell was born in Illinois in 1856, and was married to Mr. Strevell in 1880. They moved to Ogden in 1895, where Mr. Strevell founded the Strevell Hardware Company.

1896 Letter from Lyman Strevell to Charles Nettleton Strevell

In 1896, Charles N. Strevell was 38 years of age. His cousin, Lyman Nettleton, was 76 years of age and was living in Orange, Connecticut, just outside of New Haven, Connecticut. Lyman was lonely because his only son, Atwater Nettleton, had just died two years earlier.

This letter was invaluable with respect to discovering the genealogy of Zelus Nettleton. The original typed letter was transcribed and it repeated below. A scanned copy of this letter can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/3j24cjc2.

NETTLETON GENEALOGY

Following is a letter written to Charles N. Strevell by Lyman Nettleton of Orange, Conn. Charles Strevell is a full brother of John K. Nettleton, father of Elizabeth Nettleton Armour.

Orange, Conn., March 16, 1896

To Mr. Charles N. Strevell, Ogden, Utah.

My Dear Cousin and Friend:

I was very happy to hear from you through your Aunt Sarah, my cousin. But after you left Montana and went down into Utah I knew not as I should ever hear from you again. You recollect that you came from Miles City to Chicago to bury your only child Willie some years ago, and now I wish to inquire whether little Willie's place has ever been supplied in your family.

I would like also to have you furnish me with the address of your brother John K. Nettleton. I will now furnish you the names of some of the Nettleton family back to the first pioneer. In 1645 Samuel Nettleton settled in the adjoining town of Milford. I have no special knowledge of his family further than that he had one son by the name of John who was my great grandfather who purchased and settled on the tract of land which we now occupy. It is said that he had four sons: John, Joseph, Isaac, and Nathan. It is also said that John and Joseph left home, John going to Watertown, Conn., and Joseph to Ohio who has not been heard from. But Isaac and Nathan remained at home. Isaac was my grandfather, and Nathan was your great-great-grandfather. His children were John, Eli, and Nathan. Eli Nettleton married Comfort Rogers. She was my grandmother on my mother's side, and was your great-grandmother on your father's side. Their children were Comfort, Eli, Sybil, Polly, Isaac, Ephraim, and Betsy.

This last Eli of which I speak was your grandfather who died in Michigan, your father's father and your Aunt Sarah's and your Aunt Mary's father. But you have friends here in the families of your grandfather's brothers and sisters. My own mother, whose name was Comfort, was the oldest of the family, and I am the only son living. I have one younger sister by the name of Laura M. Bradley, Orange, Conn. Your Aunt Sybil has two sons and one daughter living. Their name is Peck, and if you will address Mr. Isaac L. Peck, you will I think receive

a prompt reply (Meriden, Conn.) Isaac is a mechanic and an honorable man. Another brother by the name of Dennis Peck lives in Waterbury, Conn., and a sister by the name of Pritchard, Mrs. George N. Pritchard of Waterbury.

The next aunt is your Aunt Polly Perkins. There are two sons and one daughter remaining in that family and one active grand-daughter by the name of Mrs. E. M. Smith of Waterbury. The two brothers' names are Charles and Reuben E. Perkins and Mrs. George W. Munson, all of Waterbury, Conn. They are all nicely situated and would be pleased to receive a letter from you at any time, and I think that you would receive a prompt reply from either of them.

The next of your friends in the order of the family is your Uncle Isaac Nettleton who passed away some 18 or 20 years ago. He left three sons and one daughter. The three sons are still living; two of them are living in New Haven, whose names are Elford I. Nettleton and Nathan Nettleton; both reside on Grand Ave. and would rejoice to reply to any communication which they might receive from you, Cousin Elford has two sons, the eldest is Elford C. whose address is Ansonia, Conn. The younger brother is an extra good scholar who has been somewhat unfortunate in having a partial shock of paralysis. They had two daughters, Clara, now deceased, and Evalena Robinson of Ansonia. Elford's brother Nathan is doing a good business on Grand Ave., New Haven. The other brother is Charles L. Nettleton whose address is Prospect, Conn. He has a fine family.

The next family in the order is that of your Uncle Ephraim Nettleton who was a carpenter by trade, married young and left three daughters and one son. The family were somewhat consumptive. The oldest daughter whose married name was Martha Hughes, whose oldest daughter Cate died in New Haven, was carried to Prospect for interment where the mother remained until she herself died.

The father and youngest daughter Agnes returned to New Haven in fair health, but she soon ran down under quick consumption, leaving one brother by the name of Harry Hughes, shoe dealer in New Haven. The youngest sister by the name of Sarah soon went away under consumption, leaving one sister between the oldest and the youngest by the name of Nancy, who is still living under fair health. Her husband's name is Charles Bristol, Greene St., New Haven. Your Uncle Ephraim Nettleton was always a healthy man until by mistake he drank a small quantity of potash water, after which he dwindled away, living nearly two years, leaving a wife, one son and three daughters. Their son, whose name was Henry, was married, had two daughters and one son, two of which are married and live in Hartford and are doing well. The youngest daughter, Sadie, is living with Mrs. Bristol in New Haven. We now come to the youngest sister Betsy who married a man by the name of Isaac Bradley of Prospect who was a manufacturer of Hoes and Forks, etc. The parents have passed away, leaving two sons and one daughter. Their names were Maria, Edward, and Eli. The youngest son passed away some years ago, but Edward engaged in business in New Britain manufacturing cement pipe and was doing well, but a cough took hold of him, and he ran down and sold out his business and went to California some 12 years ago. His health improved so that he lived until last August. But Maria is still living, and if you will address a letter to Miss Maria H. Bradley, corner of 'D and Arctic Streets, San Diego, you will be sure to hear from her.

I have furnished you with intelligence regarding your own direct ancestors, and now I will go back to my grandfather Isaac, a brother of your great-great-grandfather Nathan. Isaac Nettleton was born Feb. 25, 1730. His wife, Sarah Smith, was born Oct. 22, 1740. Now I suppose that your great-great-grand-father Nathan must have been born nearly as early as his brother Isaac. There might have been children between Isaac and Nathan, but I think that we might regard Nathan's birth as early as 1734.

Isaac Nettleton had a family of eleven children, whose names were as follows:
Isaac Nettleton and Sarah Smith married July 2, 1760.

1st child - Sarah Nettleton, born Sept. 25, 1761

Isaac Nettleton, born Aug. 13, 1762 - Died Sept. 26, 1774

David Nettleton born May 30, 1766 - Died Sept. 24, 1774

Hezekiah Nettleton born June 1, 1768 - Died Sept. 24, 1774

Susanna Nettleton born Feb. 4, 1770 - Died Sept. 15, 1774

Amos Nettleton (my father) born Nov. 1, 1771 - Died April 13, 1835

Daniel Nettleton born May 16, 1773 - Died Oct. 7, 1774

Susanna Nettleton born July 22, 1775

Isaac Nettleton born Jan. 14, 1777

David Nettleton born Nov. 21, 1778 - Died May, 1843

Comfort Nettleton born Oct. 28, 1782 - Died in Ohio

My only son died one year ago last December, age 48. Since that time, we are very lonely.

Genealogical Importance of this 1896 Letter

Without the existence of this letter, the family tree of Zelus Nettleton could not have been constructed. This family tree is shown in an earlier chapter of this book.

Mrs. Jason Strevell's Poems Published in 1896 Magazine of Poetry and Literary Review

Jason Strevell wrote a handwritten letter to this magazine with a biography of his wife. His letter was converted to a typed article about Mrs. Strevell and five of her poems in the 1896 Volume VIII Number six edition of this magazine. Mr. Strevell's handwritten two-page letter is shown below.

Mrs. J. W. Strevell

Mrs. Strevell was the only daughter of Dr. John and Esther Kelley, formerly of Pennsylvania. At an early day her father left the state of his nativity and settled in Ohio, where Mrs. Strevell was born. In her early childhood the family migrated still further to the westward and settled in Kalamazoo County, Michigan, where she grew up in the midst of the most pleasant surroundings. In all her early years she was the almost constant companion of a loving father who developed in her that love for the beautiful in nature which in all her later years has been an inspiration to her and is so strongly characteristic of her poems. After her marriage she lived for many years in Pontiac, Illinois. Here she was occupied chiefly with her children, at the same time taking an active part in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church, of which she was a member, and in the social duties incident to the position of her husband who was prominent in the politics of the state, and with whom she frequently spent the winter season in the capital. Her pleasant home was ever open to guests from all portions of the state, and among those of sweetest

recollection was a visit from Abraham Lincoln just before he was elected to the Presidency and left Illinois not to return alive. Another pleasing memory is of an autograph letter from Mr. Lincoln inviting she and her husband to visit him at the Presidential Mansion. Occasional poems were written during these busy years, but not until 1880, at which time she took up residence in Montana has she found time for travel and literary work. In 1895 a small volume in verse appeared, entitled "Thoughts and Memories" which she used mainly for distribution among her friends. Another and larger ~~version~~ volume may be issued the present year. The loss of an only and deeply loved daughter, coupled with ill health, have for the past few years made her life one of quiet seclusion. Her love of books has always been great, and from the quiet retreat of her husband's library she keeps in touch with a large number of friends, not only in her own country, but in many portions of the old world as well.

J. W. Strevell.

From "The Magazine of Poetry" and Literary Review Vol. VII No. 6

Jason Strevell's handwriting is relatively clear and legible in his handwritten letter to the magazine.

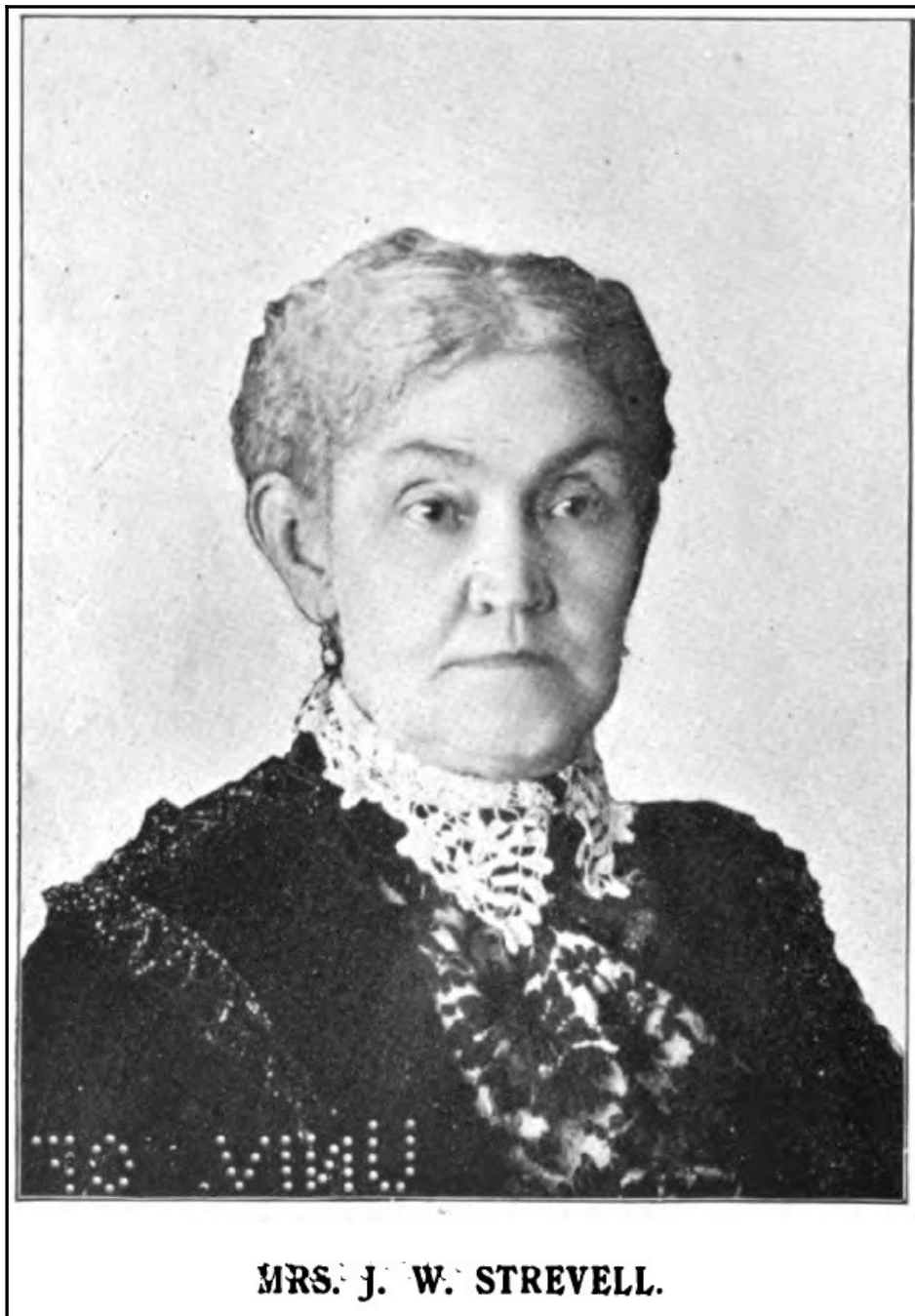
Below is the typed version of Mr. Strevell's handwritten letter which appeared in the 1896 poetry magazine.

MRS. J. W. STREVELL.

MRS. STREVELL was the only daughter of Dr. John and Esther Kelley, formerly of Pennsylvania. At an early day her father left the state of his nativity and settled in Ohio, where Mrs. Strevell was born. In her early childhood the family migrated still further to the westward and settle in Kalamazoo County, Michigan, where she grew up in the midst of the most pleasant surroundings. In all her early years she was the almost constant companion of a loving father who developed in her that love for the beautiful in nature which in all her later years has been an inspiration to her and is so strongly characteristic of her poems. After her marriage she lived for many years in Pontiac, Illinois. Here she was occupied chiefly with her children, at the same time taking an active part in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church, of which she was a member, and in the social duties incident to the position of her husband who was prominent in the politics of the state, and with whom she frequently spent the winter season at the capitol. Her pleasant home was ever open to guests from all portions of the state, and among those of sweetest recollection was a visit from Abraham Lincoln just before he was elected to the Presidency and left Illinois not to return alive. Another pleasing memory is of an autograph letter from Mr. Lincoln inviting she and her husband to visit him at the Presidential mansion. Occasional poems were written during these busy years, but not until 1880, at which time she took up residence in Montana, has she found time for travel and literary work. In 1895 a small volume in verse appeared, entitled, "Thoughts and Memories," which she used mainly for distribution among her friends. Another and larger volume may be issued the present year. The loss of an only and deeply loved daughter, coupled with ill health, have for the past few years made her life one of quiet seclusion. Her love of books has always been great, and from the quiet retreat of her husband's library she keeps in touch with a large number of friends, not only in her own country, but in many portions of the old world as well.

J. W. S.

Each article in this 1896 magazine has a sketch of the author and then examples of the author's work. Below is the illustration for Mrs. Strevell.



Mrs. Strevell's five poems that were published in this magazine are shown below.

Mount Shasta

Majestic mountain, on whose lofty crest,
 I almost fancy, Angels poise in flight,
Unite with Nature's harmonies, to bless,
 And Praise thy Maker, in His matchless might.

The plaintive notes in woodland bird below,
 The breeze that wakes the tuneful pine's deep sigh,
Loud anthems; when the thunder shakes thy brow,
 All Nature, speaks the praise of God most high.

I fain would linger near, and gaze upon
 Thy kingly splendor and thy robe of light,
Forget the lesser things, and feast my soul
 On Nature's nobler works! Nor wish the night.

Unwearied hours of autumn afternoon,
 I looked with wonder, on thy majesty sublime,
And now the starlit heavens and full-orbed moon,
 On thy resplendent beauty faintly shine.

Farewell, though monarch of the rocky realm,
 I leave thee, in thy wondrous glory fair,
And dimly gaze upon thee from afar,
 As day, and night, alike thy glory share.

WAITING FOR THE LEAVES.

I AWAIT the glad time when Nature,
Shall weave her garlands fair,
I am looking out on the dreary waste,
That lies so brown and bare.
But the beautiful leaves are coming,
The story is borne on the breeze.
The swelling buds are nodding,
And swaying in the trees.

This morning as the sunrise,
Flooded all the land with light,
Their silent voices whispered,
We have been growing through the night,
And some, even now unfolding,
In soft sunlight and breeze,
I watch for the faintest tinge of green,
In the buds among the trees.

The blessed leaves, I greet them,
In the Springtime when they come,
And I mourn them in the Autumn,
When their work of love is done,
Branches, long shorn of beauty ;
Awake ! O tempered breeze,
Breathe gently on the barren boughs,
And deck with leaves, the trees.

While new recruits are mustering,
To replace those rudely slain,
When the Frost-King, waved his sceptre,
To proclaim his cruel reign,
And by winding stream and hillside,
Touched by the Southland breeze,
The shining leaves again will clothe ;
The dear old stately trees.

DRIFTING.

FULL many are the paths we tread,
Seeking our destiny,
Hopes and fears, too oft' unsaid,
By you and me.

The world holds out a glittering prize,
We quickly grasp,
To greater good we close our eyes,
And pleasure clasp.

Time moves us on, we fail to take,
The richer store,
We idly float, the baubles break,
On barren shore.

And as our feet shall touch the strand,
Too late we find,
The good was spurned ; That held in hand,
Was left behind.

TO THE STATUE OF NYDIA.

FAIR NYDIA, if thy pure cold lips could speak,
Methinks the melody would echo long,
In tremulous sweetness, o'er my spirit break,
Inspiring thought with poetry and song.

If eyes unsealed, could open to the light ;
As, with a touch of risen sun at morn,
A modest flower, that closed and slept at night,
In milder, brighter rays, was newly born,

And hand unclasped, could touch the lyre to weave
Its tender strains with pleading plaintive tone.
But cease vain longings ! Only God can give—
The life, the soul, Man gives us sculptured stone.

The hand that gave thee wondrous grace is still,
His form cold as the marble lies, a silent clod,
And yet he lives—in thee, our hearts to thrill,
And lift the soul to purity and God.

BEREFT.

O, INFINITE Father, Thou art ever nigh—
And hearest the helpless whenever they cry,
Bereft and forsaken, Thou heedest their sigh,
Kindly Lord, lead them the still waters by.

Smooth the rough places, where little feet tread,
Guard them and shield them, mother is dead !
Turn away sorrow, temptation and dread,
In the shadow of Thy love, pillow their head.

"The Death of a Friend."

A. J. Cropsey Dies in 1896 and Is Buried in Ogden, Utah

A. J. Cropsey was a colorful character who knew Jason Strevell and his adopted son Charles Nettleton Strevell when they both lived in the Pontiac/Fairbury area. Mr. Cropsey later lived in Ogden, Utah, with Charles N. Strevell. The following article by the author was published in the Fairbury Blade newspaper.

Colorful Founder of Cropsey

By: Dale C. Maley

The village of Cropsey and Cropsey Township were named in honor of Andrew Jackson Cropsey. The story of Andrew Cropsey began with his birth on December 22, 1823 in Niagara County, New York. His parents were Daniel W. Cropsey (1797-1882) and Elizabeth Straight Cropsey (1797-1871). Andrew left home to go to Cincinnati to become a lawyer. In 1847, he married Maria Jane Harrington (1825-1874). She was an accomplished daughter of a widow living in the suburbs of Cincinnati. She was skilled at sewing and made dresses for a neighborhood clientele.

A.J. Cropsey had four sons with his first wife. The four sons were Daniel Burns Cropsey, Louis Edward Cropsey, Allen J. Cropsey, and Cassius M. Cropsey. Two additional sons died in infancy.

After two years of practice as a lawyer in Cincinnati, he moved to Will County, where his parents had moved. In 1854, Andrew moved to what is now Cropsey Township. He was the first settler in the Cropsey area. A.J. Cropsey did not remain long. He moved to Fairbury, the nearest railroad point to his farm.

Fairbury was founded in 1857 by Caleb Patten when the railroad tracks were laid. In 1859, Mr. Patton disposed of his interest in the town lots to Andrew J. Cropsey. Mr. Cropsey became the primary real estate developer in the new village of Fairbury.

In the 1860 U.S. Census, A.J. Cropsey was shown living in Indian Grove Township. His occupation was listed as a farmer. He had \$8,000 in real estate and \$2,000 in his personal estate. This net worth would be equivalent to \$288,000 in today's dollars.

In April of 1860, A.J. Cropsey was selected to be a representative at the famous Wigwam Illinois Republican convention held in Decatur, Illinois. The term wigwam was borrowed from the Native American term for a temporary structure. The gathering was conducted on May 9, 1860 and involved some 2,500 people. A 100 feet wide and 70 feet deep tent was procured from a local circus company to house the crowd.

The Illinois Republicans adopted a resolution stating, "That Abraham Lincoln is the first choice of Illinois for the Presidency, and that our delegates be instructed to use all honorable means for his nomination at the Chicago convention, and to cast their votes as a unit for him." Less than a week later, the National Republican Convention opened in Chicago, and the Illinois Republicans kept their word and nominated Lincoln for President. A.J. Cropsey likely met Abraham Lincoln at this nominating convention.

Within about a year and a half after attending the Decatur convention, A.J. Cropsey helped organize the 129th Illinois Infantry. The regiment was organized on September 8, 1862, with George P. Smith, of Dwight, as Colonel; Henry Case, of Winchester, Lieutenant Colonel; and A. J. Cropsey, of Fairbury, Major. Mr. Cropsey recruited Fairbury area men to form Company E.

After the Civil War ended, he moved his family to the Lincoln, Nebraska, area. He was one of the early developers of Lincoln. Some of his Civil War comrades from Fairbury moved with him to Lincoln, Nebraska.

Mr. Cropsey's first wife died in 1874 when he was 51 years old. Andrew then married thirty-three-year-old Emma Francis Rockwood (1842 - 1917). She was the daughter of John and Delia (Cummings) Rockwood. Emma made the trek, with her parents, from Vermont to McHenry County, Illinois by wagon train when she was five years old.

Emma grew to adulthood on her father's farm and became a school teacher. In 1875 she took a teaching job in Lincoln, Nebraska. Emma returned home that summer but was followed by a young widower she had met in Nebraska. Emma married Andrew J. Cropsey in August of 1875 in McHenry County, Illinois.

A.J. Cropsey became one of Lincoln, Nebraska's major real estate developers. He was prominent in developing University Place and Nebraska Wesleyan University. Cropsey was elected to the state senate in 1870 while he conducted a significant real estate business and was a partner in Capitol Mills. The following year, A.J. Cropsey built a large house at 1421 H St. on land he purchased from Governor David Butler. Cropsey purchased all of Block 151, directly south of the Capitol, from the governor. It immediately became unclear if the land was ever technically Butler's to sell. There were no records showing that Butler had bought the property from the state as he claimed.

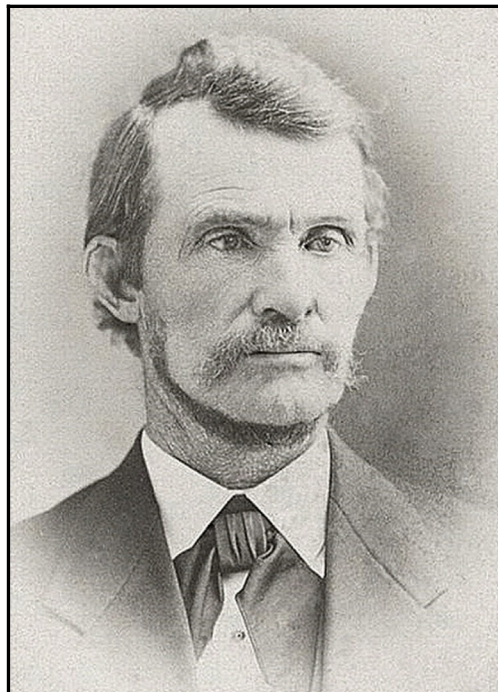
Cropsey began construction of his large, two-story, brick and stone, 15-room home on two of the 12 lots on the block in 1870. Described in detail as the Meier House in Bess Streeter Aldrich's "Spring Came On Forever," the home, one of the finest in the city, was completed in 1871.

In the spring of 1871, soon after taking office for his third term, eleven articles of impeachment were brought against Governor Butler. The first charged him with misusing some \$16,000 from the state school fund. Butler had allegedly made personal use of this money to purchase lots in the new city of Lincoln. Butler sold some of these lots to A.J. Cropsey. Butler was suspended from office by the Supreme Court and subsequently tried by the State Senate. He was convicted on the first charge, although the remaining ten were dropped. The Supreme Court then removed him from office on June 2, 1871.

A.J. Cropsey suffered several financial reversals. After one of these failures he relocated to Texas from Lincoln, Nebraska. From there, he returned to Lincoln. Again having financial troubles, A.J. Cropsey removed to Ogden, Utah. He died in Ogden at the age of 72 in 1896. He was buried in the Mountain View Cemetery in Ogden, Utah.

Other people occupied Cropsey's beautiful house in Lincoln after his death. Eventually, it sat vacant for ten years. The empty house was acquired by the state of Nebraska and razed for the construction of the present governor's mansion.

A.J. Cropsey was a Civil War hero and led a very colorful life in Illinois and Nebraska. The town of Cropsey and Cropsey Township were both named after him. The Fairbury Echoes Museum has a colorful Civil War poster showing the entire roster of Cropsey's Company E.



A. J. Cropsey (1823-1896)

Mrs. Jason Strevell Publishes Her Pamphlet in 1897

After being confined to her bedroom for about nine years, Elizabeth Strevell published a pamphlet about her childhood memories. She was 69 years of age when she wrote this pamphlet. The content of her pamphlet is shown below.

A REMINISCENCE

By Mrs. J. W. Strevell

Buffalo:
The Peter Paul Book Co.
1897

In the afterglow, as one sits calmly down, and in imagination revisits the scenes of early life, the heart seems to go back to some one place, dearer than all others—the one place where memory loves best to linger and review the thoughts and impressions which came to us in tender years, and which, if true to ourselves have clung to us all, along the journey of life, Alas, if we have allowed the worldliness, cares, and perplexities of maturer years to crowd out the early impressions of innocent childhood, so often the dawning of spiritual life and the beginning of that sweet relationship between ourselves and the infinite Father, who comes down to us through the beauties of nature!

Looking backward this November morning, I see my early home—the pleasant house, with its yellow paint, its vine-clad porches and windows, surrounded by beautiful oaks, and in the background a luxuriant garden and orchard, with fruit golden and red hanging from boughs that bent under their heavy weight; while here and there were fields of ripening grain, and grassy meadows bright with clover blossoms, shedding their fragrance all around, and musical with the humming of bees industriously gathering their winter store. Such was the home where my childhood and youth were passed, which will ever bring tender recollections of shady trees and winding paths, of meadow lilies and modest blue violets, which bloomed profusely in the grassy yard in early springtime.

Turning reverently aside from these hallowed associations, my mind wanders along a shaded and well-beaten path to a maple grove, one half mile distant—the special care and delight of my dear father. It contained forty acres, from which he had had all the timber removed, except the sugar-maples. The ground was leveled, and seeded with grass, leaving here and there some pretty spot in the wilderness and beauty of nature.

Here we often spent many happy hours together, seeking out the wildest spots, where the bitter-sweet and prickly-ash grew, he explaining to me their medicinal properties, while I picked the great white may-apple blossoms at our feet, or wandered away to find bluebells and wild columbine. In this grove, too, the maple sugar was made, in early springtime, after which everything was cleared up and the trees put on their loveliest garb and arrayed themselves in summer tints. Then I loved to ramble alone, or sit in shady nooks and listen to

the wild bird's song, or watch the squirrels as they ran and chattered in the tree-tops.

Sometimes I ventured into an adjoining wood, and wandered among great forest trees, whose solemn stillness and deep, dark shade inspired me with awe; and almost tremblingly I would return to the grove, and the pure, sweet sunlight, streaming down through leafy branches, would chase away my fears and bring back the sense of security and peace. This is the one place most fondly remembered, for here I learned to look up from nature to nature's God, and as I gazed through leafy arches to the blue dome above, He came into my heart in the "still, small voice" and whispered His love and promises, and the rainbow of hope spanned the horizon of my life. Here it was the immortal soul began to inquire after God, and, lo, He was there.

There, in the swaying of the tree-tops,
In the music of the bird,
In the murmur of the brooklet,
All the sweet, glad sounds I heard.

In the brightness of the morning,
As tender blossoms oped to view,
Warmed to life by early sunlight,
And refreshed by evening dew,

Or when the snow-cloud quickly gathered,
And the patter of the rain
And mutterings of distant thunder
Sent me to my home again,

Still I felt His gracious presence,
Did not doubt His loving care;
And now, far on the journey homeward,
He doth all my burdens bear.

In lingering over these precious memories, I sometimes long once more to revisit the scenes of long ago; to spend one more sunny morning in early springtime among these harmonies of nature, to listen to the answering notes of forest birds or the soft cooing of the dove; to see the same sweet faces of early flowers, that seemed almost to break through lingering snow-banks in their eagerness to be touched by the warm sunlight and add their beauty and fragrance to the enchanting scene; one more quiet hour, hearing only the music of nature, untouched by life's distracting cares, and feeling again fresh inspiration to a higher life and nobler deeds, that flows down into the heart from the throne of light, in refreshing streams from the perpetual fountain of eternal, unchangeable love. Such is the daydream—the memory of early years.

But ah! the night-dream comes, touched by somber shadows and dark forebodings lest, when I should journey to my distant childhood home, I might find the destroyer had been there, and, instead of the shady grove and tender blossoms, I should see upturned sod, and fields of grain waving in the sunlight. But I hasten from the thought, and cherish only pleasant memories of the long

ago. I tread the wayside paths under rustling leaves, in the companionship of flowers, and still hear the whisperings of divine love; and my grateful heart responds, " My Father."

MRS. J. W. STREVELL.

Accessing the Original Pamphlet

The original pamphlet can be viewed or downloaded at Tinyurl.com/2p95jhfk.

CHAPTER 14

1898 to 1903

Charles and Elizabeth Strevell Moved to Salt Lake City in 1899

Elizabeth Crawford Strevell died in on March 13, 1950 in Salt Lake City. Her obituary in the March 11, 1950 Deseret News recounted that they moved to from Ogden to Salt Lake City in 1899.

Mrs. Strevell was born in Illinois in 1856, and was married to Mr. Strevell in 1880. They moved to Ogden in 1895, where Mr. Strevell founded the Strevell Hardware Company. In 1899 they moved to Salt Lake City.

Biography of Jason Strevell in Book About Prominent Montana Men

An online search found an undated book by A. W. Bowen titled *Progressive Men of the State of Montana Volume One*. The biography recounted that Strevell had been in Montana for more than 20 years and both Mr. and Mrs. Strevell were still alive. This dates the book to sometime between 1899 and 1902. The biography is shown below.

JASON W. STREVELL.—Among those men who stand representative in the personnel of the bar of Montana is Mr. Strevell, who is not only a prominent and able member of his profession but has been identified with the political and industrial activities of Montana. He comes of the staunchest of colonial lineage, and was one of that notable coterie of pioneer lawyers of Illinois. He has been a resident of Montana for more than a score of years and is a leading citizen of Miles City.

He was born in Albany, N. Y., in the thirties, being a son of Harvey and Elizabeth (Lewis) Strevell, both of whom were natives of New York. Harvey Strevell was in early life a teacher, but later was a farmer in his native state, and was thus engaged until his death.

His grandfather, Woolrick Strevell, was wagon master in Gen. Washington's army during the Revolution, in which he served until the close of the war without injury. He located in the state of New York more than a century ago. His wife was a niece of Col. Lyman Lewis, an officer in the Continental army of the Revolution. She became the mother of six children, of whom three are now living, Jason W. Strevell being the fifth in order of birth.

Jason W. Strevell was educated in the famous old Rensselaerville Academy, in Albany county, N. Y., and then began reading law with Peckham & Tremaine, prominent members of the Albany bar. In 1855 he removed to Illinois, was admitted to the bar of that state in the same year and was engaged in active legal practice at Pontiac for twenty-four years. He served as a Republican in the lower house of the state legislature for four years, as a member of the

senate for the same period of time and was a member of the electoral college that elected Hayes to the presidency, and he was actively concerned in the first presidential nomination of William McKinley. He was a personal friend of Abraham Lincoln and did yeoman service in securing his presidential nomination, having been a member of the Illinois legislature during the critical epoch of the Civil war.

Since coming to Montana Mr. Strevell has taken little part in politics. Mr. Strevell is a Presbyterian, active in the cause of the Master, and is an elder in the local church of his denomination. He has been three times a delegate to the general assembly of the church and is a regular attendant of the synod and presbytery.

Mr. Strevell has been a close student, not only of books pertaining to law, but also of all works of the best literature. He has not denied himself the advantages of travel, for he has made a tour embracing Turkey, Palestine and Egypt, as well as Europe. He was for some time largely interested in the live stock industry of Montana, to which state he came in 1879, but has closed out his interests. He is a director of the First National Bank of Miles City and the owner of valuable realty in Montana and in Phoenix, Ariz, and Tacoma, Wash. On the 15th of August, 1858, Mr. Strevell was united in marriage with Miss Elizabeth Kelly, a daughter of Dr. John Kelly, a physician and surgeon of Lake City, Minn.

Accuracy of this Biography

The only item in the biography above which conflicts with other known information is the statement that Jason Strevell's grandfather was a wagon master in the Revolutionary War. There is no known data which supports this part of the biography,

Jason Strevell Creates His Last Will & Testament March 19, 1901

Ancestry.com has a copy of Mr. Strevell's last will & testament dated March 19, 1901. Mr. Strevell wanted his estate to go to his wife, except for individual donations to the following entities.

\$1,000 to niece Mrs. Elizabeth Dyer residing in Albany County, New York.

\$1,000 to niece Mrs. Rheuamy Dyer residing in Troy, New York.

\$1,000 to the Rev. E. C. Calvin, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Miles City.

\$1,000 each to dear little friends Ruth Ritner Miles and Helen Miles, daughters of George M. Miles residing in Miles City to be used for their education.

\$2,000 to the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions in New York City.

\$2,000 to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in New York City.

\$2,000 to the Presbyterian Board of Ministerial Relief in New York City.

Mr. Strevell's will also specified that if his wife was deceased when he died, his estate should be split between his adopted son Charles N. Strevell and his grandson Jason D. Miles. The will noted that Jason D. Miles was currently attending Princeton College in New Jersey.

One-thousand dollars in 1901 would be equivalent to \$33,675 in today's dollars.

Charles N. Strevell Has Lincoln's Door Casing Shipped to Him in Salt Lake City in 1901

The April 14, 1901, edition of the Salt Lake Herald newspaper published a story reporting that Mr. Strevell was now in possession of the door casing from Pontiac, Illinois, that had Lincoln's height marked on it.

This article includes the letter that Jason Strevell sent to his adopted son, Charles Nettleton Strevell, about the evening that Lincoln spent in his Pontiac house. The portion of the article that has this letter is not shown below because the letter is shown above. The balance of the article is shown below.

Salt Lake Herald

April 14, 1901

An Interesting Relic That Is Reminiscent Of Abraham Lincoln

One of the most interesting relics of Abraham Lincoln is now in the possession of C. N. Strevell of Salt Lake. It is a section of door casing. The slab of wood shows the ravages of time. It is not beautifully grained and varnished, nor would it be considered an ornament to a modern mansion, but this bit of wood is sacred, for against it the great president pressed his gaunt form while Mr. Strevell's father took his measure. The mark is there now, a faint nick in the wood near its base. It shows President Lincoln to have been exactly six feet four inches in height.

It was just thirty-six years ago today that John Wilkes Booth fired the shot that plunged a nation into mourning such as it had not experienced since the messengers hurried from Mount Vernon with the tidings that the loved Washington was no more. To no citizen did the grief have a bitterer personal tinge than to Judge J. W. Strevell, formerly of Pontiac, Ills., but now a leader of the bar of Miles City, Mont. Judge Strevell had known Lincoln personally and well.

Some time ago C. N. Strevell was visiting his old home in Pontiac, which is now occupied by his father-in-law. He had heard the story of how his father measured Lincoln and asked to be shown the door casing. Then his desire to obtain possession of the unique relic grew strong within him and he secured permission to take it away. It is now in his hands and for a few days he will exhibit it in one of the show windows of the Scott-Strevell Hardware company.

Mrs. Jason Strevell Dies in 1902 in Miles City, Montana

The first obituary for her death was published in the July 12, 1902, Butte Miner newspaper.

Miles City

**MRS. E. B. STREVELL
DIED AT MILES CITY**

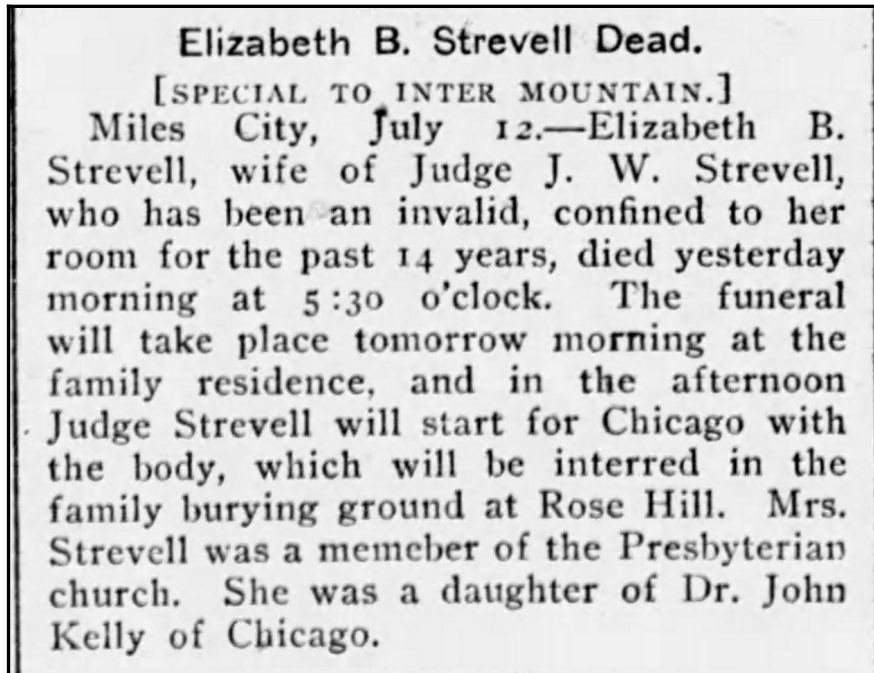
**End Came Early Yesterday
Morning — Was Wife
of Judge Strevell.**

(Special Telegram.)

Miles City, Mont., July 11.—Elizabeth B. Strevell, wife of Judge Strevell, died at the family residence this morning about 5:30 after a lingering illness. She had been confined to her bed for the past ten years with an affliction in the form of rheumatism, which first affected her limbs and joints, but slowly settled around her heart. She leaves a son in Utah and a husband in this city to mourn her death.

Mrs. Strevell was over seventy years old. A few weeks ago her son, C. N. Strevell, was sent for, as the end was thought to be near at hand, but it was prolonged until this time. On Sunday morning funeral services will be held at the residence and in the afternoon the judge will leave for Chicago with the remains, which will be placed alongside of those of her daughter, Mrs. G. M. Miles, who died in 1887.

A second obituary was published in the July 12, 1902, Butte Daily Post newspaper.



Error in the Butte Daily Post Obituary

This version of the obituary recounted that Mrs. Strevell was a daughter of Dr. John Kelly of Chicago. This is incorrect because her father lived in Lake City, Minnesota. Dr. John Kelly died in 1892 in Lake City.

Jason Strevell was 70 years of age when his wife passed away.

Burial of Mrs. Jason Strevell at Rosehill Cemetery

The July 15, 1902, edition of the Chicago Tribune published a death notice for Mrs. Jason Strevell. They miss-spelled her last name as Strewell versus the correct last name of Strevell.

STREWELL—At Miles City, Mont., July 11, Mrs. E. B. N. Strewell, wife of the Hon. J. W. Strewell. Burial at Rosehill Tuesday a.m., July 15. Pontiac [Ill.] and Albany [N. Y.] papers please copy.

Jason Strevell's Will Revised Shortly Before His Death

About three week's before his death, Jason Strevell revised his last will & testament on February 6, 1903. He died on February 27, 1903.

The following Codicil is added to this will.

My beloved wife Elizabeth B. Strevell having passed into immortality on July 11, 1902, there being no occasion that further earthly provisions be made for her, I therefore give devise and bequeath, share and share alike to my beloved adopted son Charles N. Strevell now of Salt Lake City, Utah, and to my beloved grandson Jason D. Miles now of Princeton College all of the estate, real, personal & mixed and wheresoever situate, of which I may die seized or possessed at the time of my death; subject however to all the bequests made in the foregoing will; all of which bequests I direct shall be paid out of my estate.

Written dated and signed with my own hand at Miles City Montana Feb. 6th, 1903

Jason W. Strevell

Jason Strevell Seriously Ill

The February 23, 1903, edition of the Billings Gazette published a notice that Judge Strevell was seriously ill.

News has been received here of the serious illness of Judge Strevell, the well known lawyer of Miles City. Because of his age the attending physicians were said to be extremely doubtful as to the recovery of their patient.

History of Charles Strevell and Salt Lake City Hardware Business

The February 24, 1903, edition of the Ogden Standard ran a story about the history of the large hardware store in Salt Lake City.

GEO. M. SCOTT QUILTS SALT LAKE

George M. Scott, the first non-Mormon mayor of Salt Lake City, has severed his active connections with the George M. Scott-Strevell Hardware company by disposing of most of his stock to J. H. Paterson, formerly of the Wells & Nellegar company of Chicago. He leaves for San Francisco where he will make his home in the future.

For some time past Mr. Scott has been anxious to retire from business and take a rest, but propitious circumstances never presented themselves until Mr. Paterson's offer to buy into the firm was made and accepted.

Mr. Scott said last evening at the Alta club that he will often visit Salt Lake in the future.

"San Francisco is my old home, as you may possibly know," he added. "I am simply going back home for a rest, as it were. Every since I have been in this city I have visited the city at least once or twice a year, so my return to San Francisco will be nothing more than going back to a number of my old friends and acquaintances. I am not going for good; you will see me back in Salt Lake City every few months. I am still a director in the company. While they will not need my assistance, still it will afford me much pleasure to run back occasionally, see how things are getting along and shake hands with my friends with whom I have been associated for more than thirty years."

Mr. Scott has been a resident of Salt Lake since 1871. During all those years he has been at the head of one of the largest hardware houses in this section of the west.

It was in January 1871 that Mr. Scott came to this city in quest of a location for a hardware business. He was so favorably impressed with Salt Lake City that he returned to San Francisco and reported his opinion to Mr. Dunham, who was his business associate there. In March, Mr. Scott returned to Salt Lake City and erected a building in which he engaged in the hardware business under the name of Scott, Dunham & Co. After a few years Mr. Scott bought out his partner and continued the business under the title of George M. Scott & Co. Sometime after that Mr. Strevell bought an interest in the firm, and the name was changed a third time to that of the George M. Scott-Strevell Hardware company, which is still retained.

Jason W. Strevell Dies in 1903

Mr. Strevell died less than eight months after his wife passed away in 1901. He died on February 27, 1903 in Miles City, Montana. Mr. Strevell was 71 years of age when he died.

Because Jason Strevell was such a well-known figure in Montana, there were several obituaries and tributes published about him.

February 27, 1903, The Billings Gazette Obituary

JUDGE STREVELL DEAD

Leading Member of Eastern Montana Bar Passes Away

News of the death of Judge Jason W. Strevell at Miles City was received in a dispatch to Colonel Babcock this morning. The cause of death was pneumonia.

The deceased had reached the age of three score and ten. He was a native of New York and had resided in the town where his death occurred for nearly a quarter of a century. By profession he was a lawyer and stood high among the members of the bar of the state.

February 28, 1903, Great Falls Tribune Obituary

JUDGE STREVELL DEAD

A Noted Montana Character Breathes His Last

Special to The Daily Tribune.

Miles City, Feb. 27.—Judge J. W. Strevell, 75 years old, one of the most noted characters in eastern Montana, died this afternoon. One of the deceased's greatest accomplishments was the securing of a favorable decision from the supreme court on the right of Custer county, to tax property other than that belonging to the Indians on the Crow reservation, after that court had twice ruled adversely.

Judge Strevell was worth about \$200,000. His remains will be taken to Chicago for burial.

\$200,000 back in 1903 would be equivalent to \$6.24 million in today's dollars.

February 28, 1903, Anaconda Standard Obituary

Jason W. Strevell

Born near the city of Albany, New York, John W. Strevell died yesterday at his home in Miles City, at the age of seventy-one. He studied law with a famous firm in Albany, and was admitted to the bar in 1855. Thereafter, during nearly a quarter of a century, he lived in Illinois, where he engaged in professional work and took quite an active part in politics. He served in both houses of the Illinois legislature and was a member of the electoral college that named Hayes for the presidency. In the autumn of 1879, Mr. Strevell located in Miles City, where during the remaining years of his life he engaged in professional work, also giving attention to business and commercial matters in which he had interests. He was widely and well known to a great many of the citizens of Montana.

March 1, 1903, The Missoulian Sun Obituary

Jason W. Strevell

Montana lost a distinguished citizen when Judge Jason W. Strevell joined the silent majority. He was a man among men, a study, honest, incorruptible man, who made use of the talents committed to his keeping. He was a potent force in eastern Montana, his home, and his influence extended all over the state. He was a public-spirited man, took an interest in public affairs and had a hand in shaping Montana to its present magnificence.

March 7, 1903, Christian Work and The Evangelist Obituary

Obituary.

STREVELL.—Within the past eight months Hon. Jason W. Strevell and his wife, Elizabeth, have entered upon their eternal rest. Mrs. Strevell was called home the 11th of last July, after fourteen years of weary invalidism, the last few years of which confined her closely to her bed. Always a woman of great energy, these long years of bodily suffering and weakness must have been a severe trial. But her faith in her Heavenly Father's love and her Savior's sympathy always led her to say she knew that to them that love God all things work together for good. With her husband she had been a lifelong member and leader in the work of the Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Strevell went to his Lord's immediate presence the 27th of February. He had been born in a Dutch Reformed home along the Hudson in 1832, and on going to Illinois as a young lawyer in 1856, he settled in Pontiac and at once identified himself with the Presbyterian Church. He was ordained and installed a ruling elder in 1861, and served faithfully until his removal to Miles City, Montana, in 1879. His settlement in the frontier Montana town was the signal

for the organization of a Presbyterian church, where he was again installed as elder and served efficiently till his death. For over thirty years the Evangelist was a welcome visitor in the home.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Strevell will be very sorely missed in their church. Both were teachers in the Bible school and faithful in the prayer-meeting as long as strength was given them to attend. Mr. Strevell taught his class only two week before his death. Although confined to the house for so many years, Mrs. Strevell's interest in the work of the Church never flagged, and the Woman's Missionary Society long held its meetings in her room. The sweetness of her Christian spirit, as well as her literary talent, has been preserved in a volume of poems. Some of these were published in the Evangelist. Mr. Strevell was three times called to serve his Presbytery as a Commissioner to the General Assembly. He was a man of prominence and influence in matters of business and the public good. His professional career was marked and took him before the Supreme Courts of various States and of the United States. While a member of the Legislature of Illinois he initiated much important legislation. He was favored with the personal friendship of Lincoln, and held office under him. He was successful in the management of his business affairs, and left generous bequests to the boards of the Church. His Church was always his paramount interest. To it he gave his money freely, and, better still, himself without reserve. He was a good man who seized upon the great truths of the Gospel with a clear legal mind, and loved, trusted, and served his Savior.

The world is poorer since the death of this worthy couple, but heaven is the richer.

Strevell Avenue in Miles City, Montana

Today, there is a street called Strevell Avenue. It is assumed this street was named in honor of Jason Strevell.

CHAPTER 15

1904 to 1940

1909 Livingston County History Book Published Bio of Jason Strevell

Jason W. Strevell located in Pontiac in 1855, coming from Albany, N. Y. Besides practicing law, Mr. Strevell engaged in merchandising, conducting the first exclusive hardware store in Pontiac. He was an able lawyer and was the leader in the early days of the Republican party in Livingston County. He was intimately acquainted with Abraham Lincoln and entertained him at his home in Pontiac after his lecture, which was delivered in January, 1860.

In 1864, Mr. Strevell was elected to the lower house of the General Assembly, serving two years. In 1868, he was elected to the State Senate, being the youngest man in the body at that time. He was on the most important committees in that body and served the people with marked ability. He moved to Miles City, Montana, about thirty years ago, where he met with deserved success. Ten years ago he passed away and his remains were brought to Chicago for burial beside those of his daughter Nellie.

Richard Price Morgan Speech About Abraham Lincoln in Pontiac, Illinois

According to the 1910 book, *Abraham Lincoln, by Some Men Who Knew Him*, on February 12, 1909, Mr. Morgan gave a speech titled *Lincoln at the Decatur Convention*. A copy of this book and the Morgan speech can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/473dv4m7.

Mr. Morgan recounted the Illinois state republican convention was held in Decatur on the ninth and tenth of May in 1860. The Livingston County delegation was the Hon. Jason W. Strevell, William Gagan, A. J. Cropsey, and Richard Price Morgan.

Mr. Morgan recounted in his speech about many details of the 1860 convention. He also recounted how he had roomed at Lincoln's house in Springfield and they swapped many interesting stories.

1917 Letterhead from Strevell-Paterson Hardware Store in Salt Lake City



Strevell-Paterson Hardware Co.

CAPITAL STOCK \$500,000.00

WHOLESALE

Hardware, Sporting Goods,

CUTLERY, TINWARE, GRANITE WARE,

TIN PLATE, BUTCHER SUPPLIES,

LINCOLN PAINTS

Salt Lake City, Utah,

May 25th, 1917.

McCammon Investment Co., Ltd.,

McCammon, Idaho.

Gentlemen:

We are enclosing an order for nails
to be shipped to the Inkam Mercantile Company at
Inkam, Idaho, also an order for galvanized barbed
wire to be shipped to The Arimo Cash Store, Arimo,
Idaho.

Please make prompt shipment of these
two orders and send us the bill of lading so that
we can credit your account with the amount of these
two orders.

Yours truly,

STREVELL-PATERSON HDWE. CO.

BY

Wm Hardison

1931 Article Stating that Lincoln Door Jamb Was Charles Strevell's Most Valued Possession

This article was published on February 19, 1931 edition of the Millard County Chronicle. The reporter that wrote this article was convinced the most prized possession of Mr. Strevell was the Lincoln door jam with his height marked on it per this excerpt from the article.

Out of all the varied and wonderful collection of Mr. Strevell's, this door jamb from his father's house is the one relic which appeals to me the most. Our greatest man stood his gaunt form against that door jamb when in a friend's house, and under friendship so intimate and easy that Lincoln already had his boots off - on such easy intimacy Lincoln let his host find out for himself that truly he was four inches the taller.

Such a relic is priceless. Money can't buy it; whatever else Mr. Strevell may own, I feel content he values this treasure higher than them all, and justly so.

Charles Strevell Forms Museum and Donates It to School Children of Salt Lake City in 1939

The June 9, 1939, edition of the Salt Lake Tribune published a story about the new Strevell Museum.

The Salt Lake Tribune
June 9, 1939

Rare Gift to City Schools

The Strevell Museum Donated

Fifty years ago the only son of proud and hopeful parents passed away in the roseate morn of an auspicious day. At the beginning of school age, on the threshold of life, "God's finger touched him and he slept."

A half century later Mr. and Mrs. Charles Nettleton Strevell presented to the public schools of Salt Lake City a priceless collection of archaeological, geological and historical relics and rare specimens. It is to be kept, cared for and augmented for the inspection, instruction and enjoyment of school children as a memorial to the little lad who died in 1889—Willie C. Strevell.

No more precious gift could be bestowed, as it represents the patient, discriminating research and application of a father who has drawn upon the hidden stores of many lands and ages for these treasures now generously given to the boys and girls of this city. In this entire republic no other public school organization has such a museum. Universities and colleges have expended millions in explorations and excavations to find evidence of former races, races and customs, but graded schools heretofore have had no such funds nor friends.

In accepting this gift on behalf of the pupils of the municipality, the city board of education passed a resolution at its last meeting expressing "deep appreciation of the generosity and public spirit" of the donors, declaring that it will be known henceforth as the "Strevell Museum," and that it is to be regarded and utilized as "part of the department of visual education of the Salt Lake City schools."

The Strevell Museum is located in the east wing of the Lafayette school building, a block north of Eagle Gate, within easy walking distance from the heart of the main business section of Salt Lake City, accessible to tourists, teachers and residents in, general, as well as to those attending the various schools of the community.

Among the curiosities to be seen are distinct footprints and fossilized bones of prehistoric animals that once ranged through the vales and hills of ancient Utah; forest foliage turned to stone, some leaves retaining their original luster; gastroliths that dinosaurs and other monsters carried in their craws countless thousands of years ago to grind the food they bolted after the manner of birds today; beautiful objects of classic art brought from Europe: utensils and cloth

from the South Sea islands; pottery and baskets from Indian artists; minerals from many mining sections and historical reminders of Lincoln, who was once a visitor at the Strevell home in Illinois when the present representative of the family was a small boy.

Five years ago this collection having already grown beyond the capacity of one man's care, the Utah State Museum association was organized and articles of incorporation were filed, with Anthony W. Ivins, Charles N. Strevell, David A. Smith and Charles S. Pulver as Incorporators. The purpose was to consolidate all similar collections in the state with a hope of securing funds for construction of a suitable museum building in a convenient location for the display and protection of all contributions.

No great progress was made on account of the evident reluctance of many collectors to relinquish exclusive control of smaller accumulations in favor of one mammoth museum to be managed by a general board under a self-perpetuating system. As a result of this failure the public schools are now in possession of the finest museum of the kind owned by any group of boys and girls in the United States. The donors are entitled to the thanks and gratitude of the city and its schools, as well as the appreciation of every parent and resident of Salt Lake City.

Charles Nettleton Strevell Publishes Book About His Museum in 1940

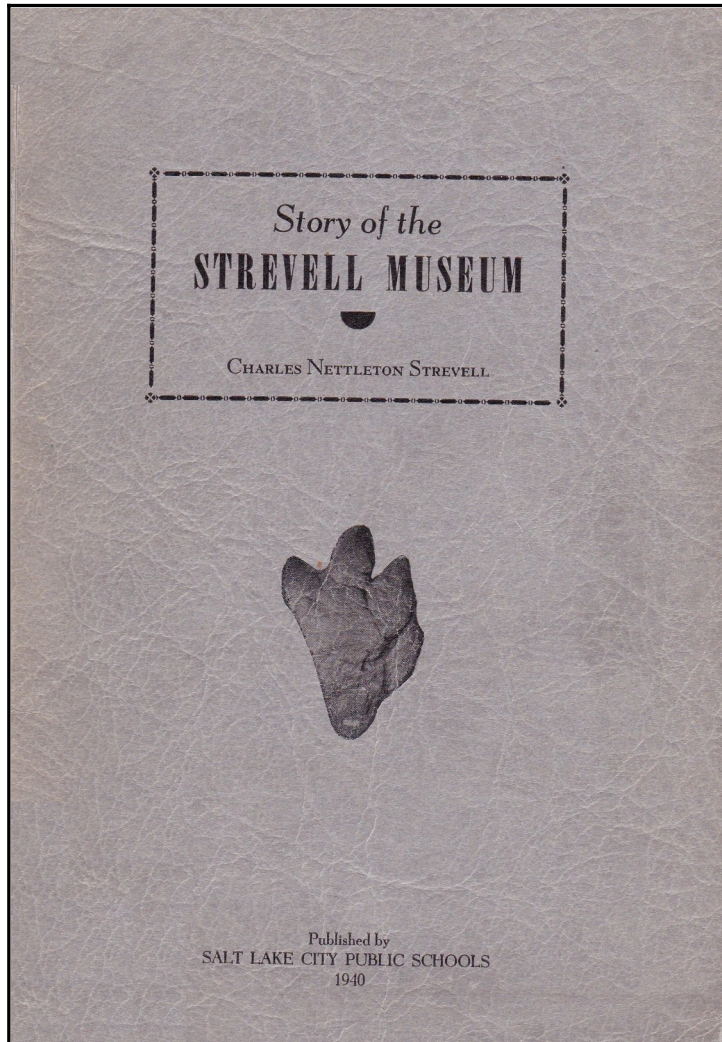
Charles N. Strevell was a lifelong collector of historical artifacts. It has been reported that he had over 10,000 different artifacts in his collection.

Charles Strevell and his wife decided to use his collection to create a museum for the school children of Salt Lake City. They created the museum in the memory of their son Willie C. Nettleton Strevell that died when he was six years old in Miles City in 1889.

In 1940, Charles N. Strevell was 82 years of age and his wife Elizabeth was 84. Their son Willie had been dead for 51 years.

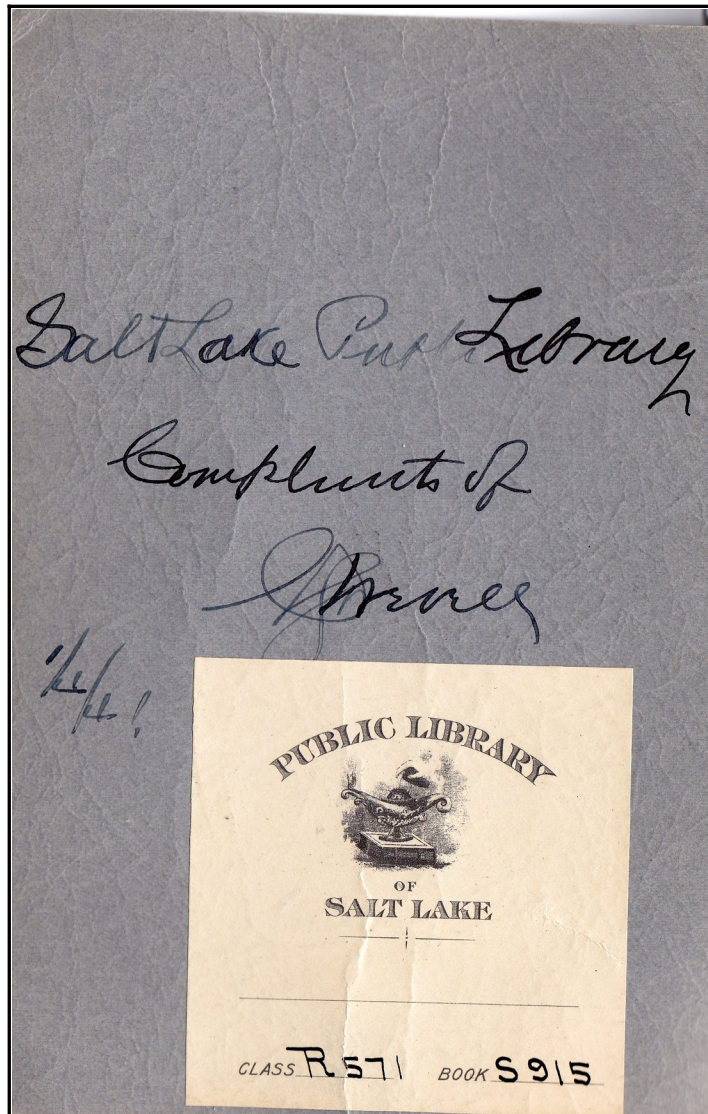
The title of this book is *Story of the Strevell Museum*.

Cover of Museum Book

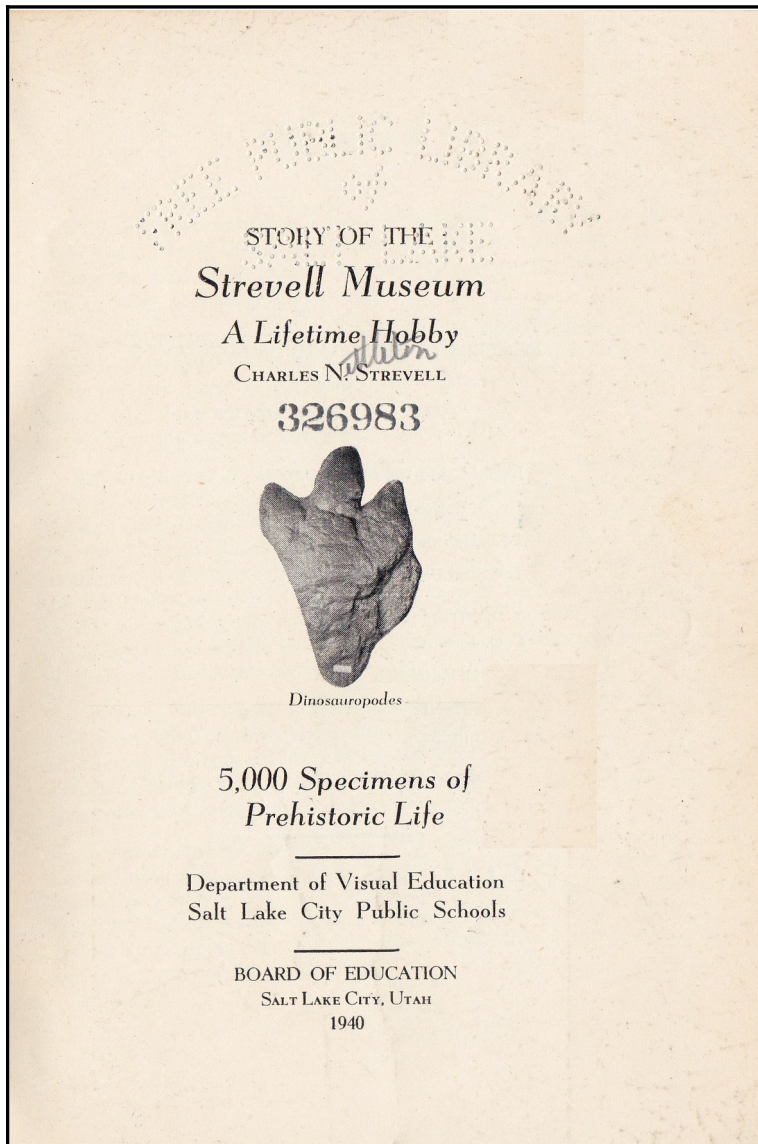


Inside Cover of Strevell Book About Museum

A copy of this book was donated to the Livingston County Historical Society by Collins Miller. This particular copy was actually signed and donated to the museum by Charles N. Strevell.



Title Page of Strevell Book About Museum



Forward Page of Strevell Book About Museum

Foreword

In the following pages I have attempted to give in some detail the history of the specimens, relics, and articles comprising the collection which we have given to the Board of Education of Salt Lake City, Utah.

The Collection of Prehistoric Life has been renamed the Strevell Museum by the Board of Education and this history, or story, has been prepared at the request of Dr. L. John Nuttall, Jr., Superintendent of Salt Lake City Schools, to preserve many incidents in connection therewith.

Since the age of seven, I have been collecting, beginning with gathering Carnelians on the shore of Lake Pepin in Minnesota. At the age of ten, while watching workmen constructing the Lincoln Tomb, at Springfield, Illinois, I picked up a rough piece of the granite, which was really the beginning of the Strevell Collection. This life work will now be available to the boys and girls, as well as the general public, owing to the cooperation of the Board of Education in providing a permanent and beautiful museum room.

If, from the silent lessons taught by these reminders of past ages, some benefit may come to the boys and girls trying to unravel the age-old history of our planet, then the pleasure and benefit, which have been mine, in gathering and displaying this collection, will have fulfilled their mission.

I was surprised and pleased when Dr. Nuttall sent me his "Introduction". I would have hesitated to ask him to write it, but when received and read, it seemed to me that his appreciation and introduction lifted the pamphlet to a higher plane. If friends feel as Dr. Nuttall does about this unpretentious volume, then I shall be gratified.



It is interesting to note that the first artifact that Charles Nettleton Strevell found was near Lake Pepin in Minnesota. He would have been visiting his grandfather, Dr. John Kelly, who lived in Lake City, Minnesota, near Lake Pepin.

List of Illustrations from Strevell Museum Book

List of Illustrations

<i>Picture of Plaque</i>	page 6
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Note the ***Lincoln Door Casing*** entry from the house at 401 West Livingston Street in Pontiac.

Introduction Page from Strevell Museum Book

Introduction

By DR. L. JOHN NUTTALL, JR.

Superintendent of Salt Lake City Schools
Salt Lake City, Utah

Behind a collection of historic, archeological, or scientific articles, are two human stories. One is a representation of the life which originally created the articles on display. The other story is that of the process of collection. The gift of the Strevell Museum to the Board of Education prompted a request that the donor prepare a descriptive pamphlet which would identify and describe the articles and which would also tell as he wished it told the story of the time, the place, and the manner in which the articles were found and made a part of the collection. It was also requested that this pamphlet contain the collector's interpretation of the meaning of the articles included in the Museum collection. This pamphlet is therefore Mr. Strevell's story of the Museum. It is not assumed that this is a complete scientific analysis of the collection. Here are presented the stories associated with this life-long hobby of a business man who in his later years has organized his collection in such a way that it will be useful to others. Many articles in the Museum have suggested associated ideas which are part of the memories Mr. Strevell has related. The Board of Education is making the collection in the Museum available for educational use. It is happy to publish Mr. Strevell's story, as he has told it, as a part of this educational service.

Plaque Page from Strevell Museum Book



Chapter About Lincoln Related Items in the Museum

Abraham Lincoln Case No. 29 — 7 items. Lincoln-iana. In January, 1860, Abraham Lincoln delivered a lecture in the old home town, Pontiac, Illinois, his subject being "The Wheel and Axle." He was entertained at our home during the night and ate at our table. After the lecture and following the reception, Mr. Lincoln and my father were visiting and the question of height came up. Mr. Lincoln stood beside a door and asked that he be measured. My father measured his height, six feet four inches and cut a notch showing it. I have that door casing in my collection of Lincoln-iana. After securing it, I wrote my father for his recollection of this incident and his reply follows.

Miles City, Montana
March 21, 1901.

"Dear Charles:

I send you today, such recollections as I have, connected with my measuring the height of Mr. Lincoln. You tell me that you took off the door casing and that you have it. It is certainly an interesting relic.

The incidents connected with my measuring Mr. Lincoln's height were about as follows:

"The young men of Pontiac, Illinois, in the winter before Mr. Lincoln was nominated for president, had undertaken to maintain a lecture course which was much more in vogue then, than now. Among the lecturers secured, was Mr. Lincoln.

I introduced him to a very large audience, and, before introducing him, I asked him what subject I should announce for his lecture and he replied 'The Wheel and Axle.' That lecture, though one of the most interesting that I ever heard before or since, was never found in his papers; it was a written lecture, but no trace of it was ever obtained after his death.

He was entertained at our house during the night and, after the lecture, there was a general reception, a large number of citizens of the town calling upon him during the evening. After the reception had closed and all of our family except Mr. Lincoln and myself retired, he and I sat up until about twelve o'clock, in conversation, a great deal of which I could repeat here, but it is not necessary to do so.

I do not; know, nor have I been able to remember at all, what incident it was brought up the subject of his height. He said that he was six feet four; I told him that it scarcely seemed possible to me that he was four inches taller than myself.

"I am just six feet. 'But at all events,' he said, 'you can take my height if you wish'; and I did so, he standing with his back to the door-casing which you now have, and I taking the measure with great caution, I think with a two foot rule. I remember very distinctly when I was placing the rule on top of his head to get

as near a perfect level as I could, noticing how heavy and coarse his black hair was. He had a heavy head of hair and it was very coarse and black.

The measure was taken in his stocking feet; he had some time previous to that, 'pulled off his boots,' and he proved to be just the height you will find on the door casing, which I think is exactly six feet four.

If you should be at all interested in any portion of the conversation I had with him that evening, I can give you a sample of it.

The time of which I am speaking was in the troublous days of slavery and anti-slavery, and one portion of the country was in sentiment entirely arrayed against the other, the North against the South, and the heated condition of the public mind soon eventuated in the clash of arms between the North and the South.

Our conversation was largely upon this subject. I said to him, 'I believe you will be nominated for president at the approaching convention in Chicago.'

I did not know then, what his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith afterwards told me was true, that he did not like to have anyone say to him that he would be nominated; I suppose that it was upon the ground that there was a great deal of that talk which he himself regarded as flippant and much of it said, perhaps, with a mere idea to please him. This he did not like. In answer he asked me with a rather stern countenance why I said that.

"I soon gave him proof that I did not say it without what I regarded as a good reason for doing so; he and Douglas had their joint debate two years before. I said to him, 'Douglas will be nominated at Baltimore and the people will never be satisfied until you and he have had this contest out on a broader field than the one in which you were engaged in your joint debate.' This was a conviction of mine, and I think it immediately addressed itself to him as a conviction.

"Well,' he said, 'what you say of Mr. Douglas being nominated at Baltimore may be true, and it may not, but I can tell you one thing, he will not be nominated at Baltimore without a great fight.' The event proved how much better he understood the situation than I did. The convention at Baltimore resulted in a tremendous fight and a split, but he said, 'Even if what you say should turn out to be true, I do not see how that would necessitate my nomination as you seem to think.'

"He then said, which his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith, stated to me afterwards was probably as much as he ever said to anyone, 'I have thought that I might be named for the second place on the ticket but not for anything higher.'

"In talking in relation to this matter as he had presented it, I asked him who would, in his judgment, be nominated. He said, 'I think Mr. Seward will be nominated.' His prediction that Seward would be nominated would have proven to be entirely true had it not been for Horace Greeley who went into the convention as an alternate from one of the western territories.

“I often met Mr. Lincoln during my residence in Illinois and had many conversations with him in relation to professional and political subjects. I was a member of a state Republican convention in which it was decided unanimously to present his name at Chicago.

“I never saw Mr. Lincoln alive after his election, but your mother and myself received an autographed letter written entirely in his own hand urging us to visit him at the White House, but that visit was never made.

Yours,

(Signed) J. W. Strevell.”



LINCOLN DOOR CASING

From Pontiac, Illinois.

Where Lincoln's height was measured and marked on casing, in 1860.

In response to a request to my father for information concerning Lincoln to be used as the basis of an address to be given at the annual meeting of the Lincoln Club at Ogden, Utah, February 12, 1896, I received the following letter:

"Mr. Lincoln is one of the characters that will grow in history as long as the human race endures. The world has produced a great number of smart men, but its truly great ones can almost be counted on your fingers. Hannibal, Caesar, Alexander, Cicero and Demosthenes are the names around which ancient history revolves.

Back of them and still more ancient, Abraham and Moses and a few names like these illuminate the early history by great deeds done, more than by words spoken. Often, the two elements words and deeds, combine in the same character and carry the person on to the topmost round of fame.

In modern times, in our own history, there are a few names whose luster time will not dim and who, through the ages, will be as bright as any we record upon the scroll of fame.

Washington is destined to deathless memory. The name of Lincoln will live in the memory and hearts of men as long as the human race endures. In every character there is much that is peculiar, much that is apart from the common lot.

This was peculiarly true of Lincoln. Scarcely any other character is so conspicuous in the history of the race. Moses did indeed keep the flocks of his father-in-law in San Jethro, but long before this humble life he had been a student of the arts in the court of the Egyptians with whose monarch he was later to contend.

Lincoln rose from the very depths of poverty, without adventitious birth, unaided and alone, but by divine wisdom to be the absolute master of destiny. It is said that he who saves a nation is greater than he who founds a nation. But where is the other name who saved both a nation of oppressors and the people they oppressed? To those who knew Mr. Lincoln there was much about him that was unlike other men.

He often jested with the lip when at the same time he was pained with sadness at the heart. It would be useless to undertake to analyze his greatness or to attempt to find out in what it consisted. Like a mountain he stood alone and when conviction had fastened upon him, it was just as availing to attempt to remove the mountain as him. I doubt if he ever acted in any great matter till convinced, and fully convinced that he was right.

His nature was deeply sympathetic. Douglas, in their joint debates, in 1858, often said in his addresses that he cared not whether slavery was voted up or voted down, but every groan of unrequited toil pierced Lincoln's heart. He remembered those who were bound, as being bound with them.

It has been said by both Herndon and Lammon who were biographers of Mr. Lincoln and both of whom I knew well, that Mr. Lincoln was, in religious

sentiment, an infidel. I think from all I know that this was true of his early life, but nothing could be farther from the truth in his later life. I suppose without any assumption or arrogance that I know as much on that subject and as to when and how his mind was changed as any one now living and if any time your club should be interested in the matter I will write it for you. At present I have written quite enough.

(Signed) J. W. STREVELL."

The following is a copy of Lincoln's autobiography written at the request of Jesse W. Fell, the noted tree planter of northern Illinois, and bequeathed to the Hon. Herbert Hoover upon the death of Mr. Fell's daughter. The original, which was kept in a bank vault in Normal, Illinois, prior to its presentation to Mr. Hoover, will presumably be transferred to Leland Stanford, Jr., University of Palo Alto, California.

In presenting to the public a facsimile of Abraham Lincoln's autobiography, it is due to the memory of that great man that a brief statement be made of the circumstances under which it was written. In the autumn of 1858, during the celebrated discussion between Senator Douglas and Mr. Lincoln, I had occasion to travel in the middle and eastern states, and finding there a laudable curiosity to learn something more of the latter than was then generally known, and looking too, to the possibility of his becoming an available candidate for the presidency in 1860, I applied to him for a brief history of his early life.

After repeated efforts on my part, in December, 1859, he placed in my hands a manuscript, of which the following is a copy, written with that freedom and unreserve which one friend would exercise in talking to another, and in which his peculiar conversational style is so happily set forth.

I need scarcely add that this simple unadorned statement of his was not intended for publication, but merely to give a few facts relating to his early history.

Normal, Illinois.
March 20, 1872.
JESSE W. FELL

I was born February 12, 1809, in Hardin county, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks.

My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham county, Virginia, to Kentucky about 1781 or 1782, where, a year or two later, he was killed by the Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he was laboring to open a farm in the forest.

My father (Thomas Lincoln) at the death of his father was but six years of age. By the early death of his mother, he was even in childhood, a wandering, laboring boy, and grew up literally without education. He never did more in the way of writing than bunglingly to write his own name. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer county, Indiana, in my eighth year. It was a wild region, with many bears and other animals still in the woods. There were some schools, so-called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond "readin', writin', and cipherin' " to the rule of three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood he was looked upon as a wizard. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three. But that was all. The little advance I now have upon this store of education I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity.

I was raised to farm work till I was twenty-two. At twenty-one I came to Illinois — Macon county. Then I got to New Salem, where I remained a year as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Black Hawk war; and I was elected captain of a volunteer company, a success that gave me more pleasure than any I have had since. I went into the campaign—was elated—ran for the Legislature the same year (1832), and was beaten—the only time I ever have been beaten by the people. The next, and three succeeding biennial elections, I was elected to the Legislature. I was not a candidate afterward. During the legislative period I had studied law and removed to Springfield to practice it. In 1846 I was elected to the lower house of Congress. Was not a candidate for re-election. From 1849 to 1854, inclusive, practiced law more assiduously than ever before.

Always a Whig in politics, and generally on the Whig electoral tickets, making active canvasses. I was losing interest in politics when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused me again.

If any personal description of me is thought desirable, it may be said that I am in height, six feet four inches, nearly; lean in flesh, weighing on an average one hundred and eighty pounds; dark complexion, with coarse black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected.

A. LINCOLN.

This case also contains a small section of the Linden tree in 1858, which was donated by J. Emmet Wilson, Mayor of Quincy; also a piece of the rough granite of which Lincoln's tomb and monument is constructed. Photographs of Lincoln's house, his horse and his dog, all of which I secured at Springfield as a boy of ten, while acting as page for Lieutenant Governor Daugherty in 1868 and 1869.

There is also a copy of the photograph taken by Chase of Chicago, which Lincoln said made him look more like a human being than any that had been published previously, and that it had a very great influence on his election as president. In addition there are pictures of Lincoln at Washington, of his son, Tad, St. Gauden's statue of Lincoln in Lincoln Park Memorial, Chicago, the Lincoln Tomb and Monument at Springfield, the

Lincoln Memorial at Washington, a photograph of Lincoln and his cabinet, in addition to several other photographs.

Shirley Temple

When the "Temples" visited us, the collection was then located in the Temple Square Museum. While looking at the Lincoln door casing, I said to Mr. and Mrs. Temple that Lincoln's height was six feet four inches. Mr. Temple said, "That is just the height of my son." Shirley was looking in the case of Yellowstone Agates, apparently not giving any attention to us. Shortly after, en-route to the Tabernacle for the noon-day recital, Mr. Cannon said to Shirley, "Have you brothers or sisters?" She replied like a flash, "I have a brother just as tall as Lincoln." Shirley is a wonderful little girl, with a mind of an adult.

My father was appointed by Mr. Lincoln, Cashier of Customs, at New Orleans, Louisiana, and filled the position until, with many other northern people, driven out by an epidemic of cholera, or yellow fever.

1940 Pantagraph Article about Lincoln and Strevell

Just five weeks after Charles N. Strevell published his book about his new museum, the Pantagraph ran a story about Lincoln and Strevell. This story was published on February 8, 1940.

Of Human Interest

LINCOLN IN PONTIAC

BY MARTHA LIVINGSTON. Pantagraph Reporter in Chatsworth.

CHATSWORTH.—(PNS)— With the accent on democracy the February days which precede the birthday of Abraham Lincoln are the most fitting season during which to re-emphasize the facts and stories which we know about our countryman. Although Livingston county was too far from Mr. Lincoln's home to be the scene of his everyday experiences, we treasure the few accounts we have of his visits here.

Mr. Lincoln's first recorded visit in Livingston county was in 1840 when he appeared in Pontiac at a trial. We have no report of the date or the details of this trial. The young lawyer was at the county seat again in 1855. This visit was not of his own volition. We retell an interesting anecdote connected with the occasion.

SNOWBOUND.—In February of the above year the train on which Mr. Lincoln was traveling from Chicago to his home in Springfield, became snowbound north of Pontiac. A messenger was sent to the city to inform the railroad agent of the passengers' predicament. The agent explained the situation to the citizens. It being before the days of snow plows, the people were accustomed to struggles with the wind and weather. They immediately formed a party of volunteers who took teams and sleds through the raging storm to the rescue of the snowbound travelers. The rescuers were equipped with blankets from many homes and the rescued were wrapped in them and brought to Pontiac warm as well as safe.

Mr. Lincoln with several others was assigned to the home of John McGregor. Mr. McGregor, the first attorney to locate in Pontiac, lived in a new house at the corner of West Madison and North Oak streets. We do not know whether it was several days or several weeks before the road was cleared and the train able to precede.

NON PAYING GUEST.—Tradition tells us that when Mr. Lincoln left the home he attempted to pay Mrs. McGregor for his board and lodging. The hostess refused emphatically. The two young daughters, Emma and Elizabeth, who had undoubtedly been enjoying the excitement of a house full of strangers, accompanied their visitor to the gate.

If the little girls had been excited when the company arrived imagine how they felt when they discovered that upon departing the tallest of the guests had left them each a gold dollar.

Mr. Lincoln's final appearance in the county was Friday evening, Jan. 27, 1860 when he spoke before the Young Men's Literary association of Pontiac. This time he was the guest of the Hon. Jason W. Strevell, young attorney and hardware merchant. Abraham Lincoln spoke at the Presbyterian church. The lecture was criticized for lack of originality.

18 Saturday Morning

The Salt Lake Tribune

Established April 15, 1871

Issued every morning by Salt Lake Tribune Publishing Company

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Salt Lake City, Utah, Saturday Morning, December 21, 1940.

The Strevell Museum Story of Its Start and Growth

In a neatly-printed, well-written and intensely interesting booklet of 96 pages, the story of the "Strevell Museum" is told by Charles Nettleton Strevell, one of Utah's foremost citizens and donor of the

rare collection of historic, geologic and archaic relics and specimens housed in the east wing of the Lafayette school building at the northwest corner of State and North Temple streets in Salt Lake City.

Some 70 years ago a lad of the middle west began hunting for curious objects to study their oddities, uses and scientific value. Starting with a piece of rough granite chipped from a monument erected over the remains of Abraham Lincoln at Springfield, in the state of Illinois, the hobby became a favorite pastime and led the successful business man of later years into many parts of the west and the world, accumulating evidence of incredible or forgotten facts.

In the course of time the assembled treasures attained such proportions that they were a care and a burden to their possessor. In memory of an only son who died many years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Strevell decided to present the entire collection to the board of education to hold in trust and for the benefit of all boys and girls of Salt Lake City. This was accomplished with legal formality on the 9th of May, 1939.

In the booklet printed by the local board of education Mr. Strevell relates with commendable pride and engaging retrospection the story of each addition to his priceless collection. He gives credit to those who assisted him in various expeditions, including Don Maguire, Dr. Frederick J. Pack, Dr. Earl Douglass, the Sternbergs, Dr. A. S. Boyle, David A. Smith, Charles S. Pulver, President A. W. Ivins and others who rendered personal or scientific assistance in exploring caves and canyons from which many mysteries were brought to light.

In a scholarly introduction to the booklet, Dr. L. John Nuttall Jr., superintendent of the Salt Lake City schools, expresses appreciation of the articles donated and of the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Strevell.

CHAPTER 16

1941 to 1943

Portrait Photo of Charles N. Strevell Sent to His Niece in 1941

In September of 1941, Charles N. Strevell sent an eight by ten inch portrait photo of himself to his niece, Elizabeth K. Nettleton-Armour. The portrait also included a note from Mr. Strevell to his niece. Mr. Strevell was 83 years of age when he sent this copy to his niece in 1941.

It is likely this photo was taken when C. N. Strevell was between the age of 50 and 60. He aged significantly by the time his obituary photo was used in 1947.

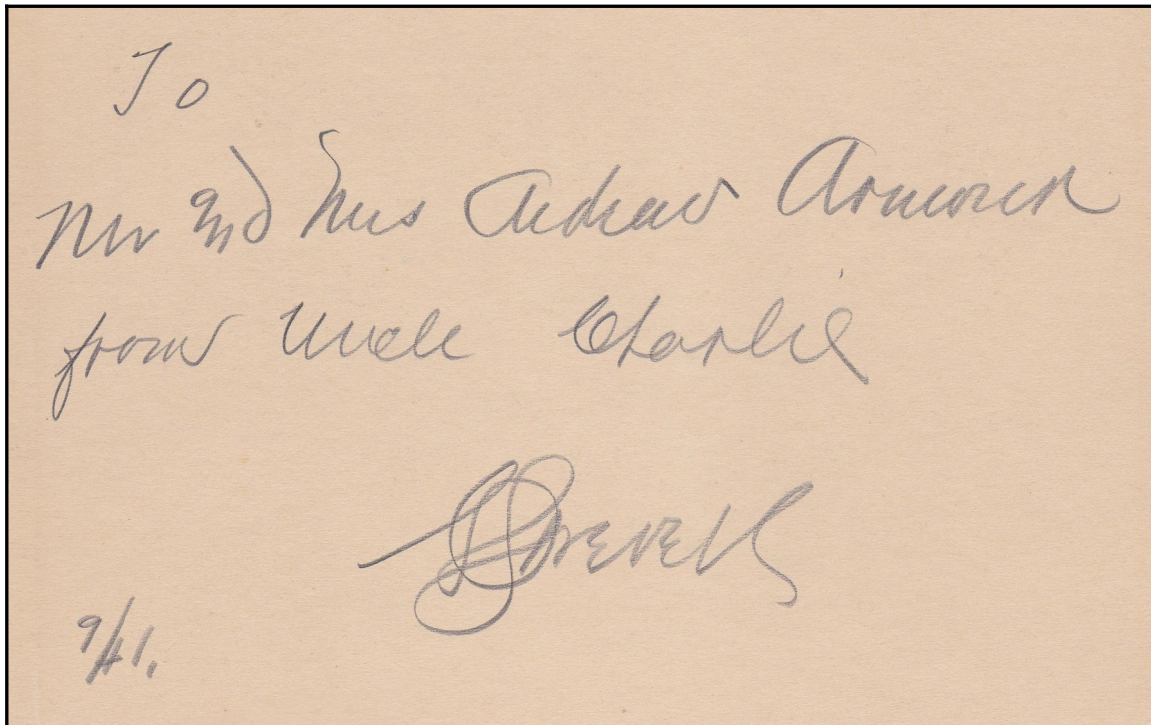




Photo of Charles Nettleton Strevell

1942 Letter from Charles N. Strevell to Niece Elizabeth K. Nettleton – Armour

CHARLES N. STREVELL
BRANSFORD APARTMENTS
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

March 10, 1942

My dear Niece,

When I received your very good letter I thought that I would look up a letter which I had from Auntie Gorton giving something of the Nettleton genealogy. I have looked through various papers where I thought this was filed, but as yet I have not been able to find it. I shall look for this and when I do, I shall let you have the information which you asked for.

From memory I would say that your father, John K. Nettleton was born in 1846, and I think at Constantine, Michigan. Of course you and none of us have ever heard from him since he started West from Minnesota hoping to find employment. When he reached the Dells, Oregon, he sent a telegram to me at Ogden asking if there was not something which I could help him secure along this line.

This telegram was delivered to our store and the young man that I had left in charge of our business sent it on to me at Chicago by mail and we were then at the World's Fair in Chicago, and the telegram reached me about a week later. As I did not know of anything which would be satisfactory to him and realizing that he would not have waited at the Dells all this time of course I made no reply. Since then I have never heard anything from him very much to my regret.

I received several very nice letters from your daughter, and I regret that it has seemed impossible for me to answer them. I wish that you and she would both feel that we are pleased to hear from each of you, but conditions are such with me that it is practically impossible for me to keep up a correspondence.

With kindest remembrances to you all.

Aunt Elizabeth is improving slowly and is stronger than she was a few months ago. She still has trouble with the knee, but it is improving slowly. We hope that when we get warm spring weather so that we can get out for walks in the sunshine, we are hoping that she will be very much improved.

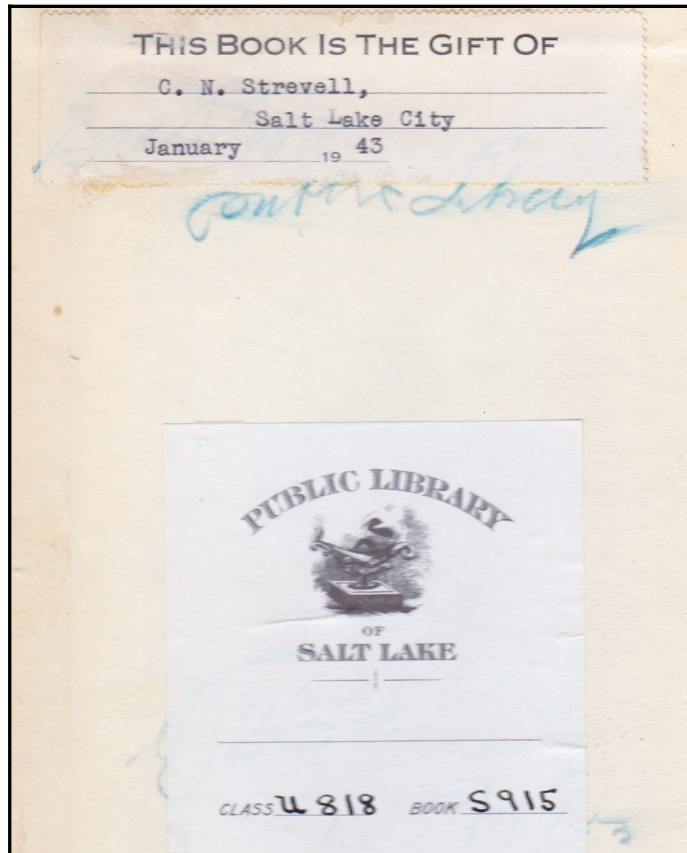
CNS:s



There were two world's fairs in Chicago. The first was in 1893 and the second in 1933. In the letter, C. N. Strevell recounted that he received a telegram from his brother, John K. Nettleton, while Mr. Strevell was at the Chicago World's fair in 1933. In 1933, John K. Nettleton was in Dells, Oregon, when he sent the telegram.

Charles N. Strevell Publishes "*As I Recall Them*" Book in 1943

Mr. C. N. Strevell published this book on January 1, 1943. That year, Mr. Strevell was 85 and Mrs. Strevell was 87 years of age. Mr. Strevell purchased and donated a copy of his new book to the Salt Lake City Public Library. This copy of the book was obtained by Collins Miller and donated to the Livingston County Historical Society. The book is 308 pages in length.



Forward Section of the Book

Since retiring from active business, there has been more or less of an opportunity to "recall" incidents and stories, most of which have come to my knowledge during my life in the West. Originally, I had thought that the stories concerning noted western characters, some of which I have told from one coast to the other, and of which my friends have said, "You are the only one now living actually knowing of these incidents, and it seems they should be preserved."

Having in mind Noble Warrum's Tribune editorials and his book "Forced Landings" and, since receiving the latest book of President Heber J. Grant (President of the L. D. S. Church) and also Russel L. Tracy's, the idea has grown and it now seems worth while to put into printed form such of these stories, incidents, and experiences that I am able to recall from memory . . . no notes or memorandum have ever been made. I have been told that if there is any humor in a story, I am quite apt to detect it. Having in mind "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest men," I have included various stories in which I think there is a vein of humor.

I have been told by other elderly persons that they find it easier to recall events happening many years ago and that they come with greater force and clarity than events in recent years. The introduction, written by my friend of many years standing, Noble Warrum, Sr., editorial writer on The Salt Lake Tribune, is a distinct addition to the book. I feel sure he would not have written this unless he thought that the stories or incidents might be of interest to our mutual friends.

I have no illusions as to the literary merit of the book or an ambition to be known as a raconteur, but trust that, in view of our friendship, you will not be too critical but will get some pleasure in reading the stories herewith given..

For my friends I hope that in their old age they may have peace of mind, health, comfort, and happiness.

C. N. Strevelle

Introduction Section of the Book

Introduction

NOBLE WARRUM, SR. Editorial Writer, "The Salt Lake Tribune"

Those who peruse these interesting memoirs of a modest but active participant in six decades of western development will become acquainted, to some extent, with a man who deserves to be remembered. The writer of this introduction has known and honored for almost a half century the able and unassuming author of the volume.

Beginning with Abraham Lincoln, upon whose knee he sat as a child, Charles Nettleton Strevell has retained and recorded impressions of many characters of the middle west and the far west, people he met while following the star of his destiny from an Illinois town to a state he helped create in the inter-mountain region.

Charles Nettleton Strevell was a fellow member of the constitutional convention of 1895—the body that framed the fundamental law of Utah in conformity with requirements of the Enabling Act of Congress. As a studious, conscientious, dignified and attentive delegate, he was influential in his sincerity and simplicity of expression and demeanor and won the friendship and confidence of all his colleagues.

As any reader of these memoirs may ascertain. Mr. Strevell engaged in diverse and divergent lines of endeavor—but the text fails to show that he was successful in all of them. As a page for the governor of Illinois when Grant was president of the republic; as a homesteader in Montana where he had gone for his health; as a merchant in Miles City during an epoch of frontier turbulence; as a dealer in wholesale and retail hardware in Ogden and Salt Lake City; as an amateur archaeologist and life-long collector of historical and geological curios; as a philanthropic citizen of the state and nation, Charles Nettleton Strevell is worthy and well qualified to recall picturesque personalities and recount unusual episodes identified with that dramatic period of colonization already known as the "Old West"—an epoch of excitement and achievement fast fading into the haze of romantic tradition.

Unless preserved by the patient, painstaking hands of reliable and sympathetic chroniclers like Mr. Strevell, many incidents and characters of other days might be forgotten altogether or lack verification if related or described under other circumstances. But the author of these reminiscences has seen with his own eyes, heard with his own ears and experienced in his own life the tragedies and comedies of which he writes.

Towns and mining camps have been named for him; a flourishing in Salt Lake City still bears his name, although he long since retired from participation in its affairs; a museum of art, curios, fossils and historical relics, collected and donated by Mr. Strevell is now the property of the public schools of Salt Lake City—dedicated to the memory of an only child, a son who died many years ago.

At the time this introduction is written. Mr. Strevell may be seen upon the streets, as dignified and sprightly as ever, immaculately groomed and dressed, amiable and easily approached, calm and kindly disposed—one of the most optimistic conservatives to be met in a life time.

First Chapter of the Book

The first chapter of the book deals with the time Charles N. Strevell spent in Illinois between his birth in 1858 and when he moved to Montana in 1879.

In this chapter he repeated the 1901 letter his father sent him about Abraham Lincoln's visit to their house in 1860. This same letter was in his 1940 book about the formation of his museum, shown in a previous chapter.

Also in this chapter he repeats the listing of the other Lincoln related items he had in his museum collection. He also repeated the Lincoln autobiography from his 1940 museum book.

Also in this chapter is a copy of the 1896 letter his father sent him about Abraham Lincoln. This letter is also in his 1940 museum book.

Charles N. Strevell did add quite a bit of material in his 1943 book that was not part of his 1940 museum book. The first new material he added was how he got into politics at the age of ten.

During the campaign which resulted in the election of General U. S. Grant as president, and Schyler Colfax, Vice-president, the Republicans had "Marching Clubs" organized all over the country called the "Grant Tanners." The club members wore leatherette caps and capes and carried a flaming, smoky, kerosene torch. When I saw one of these celebrations, I said to my father that I would like to have an outfit and join the "Tanners," which I did very soon. Marching at the rear of the men, carrying a torch, which made just as much smoke and smudge as any that the men carried, I did not realize that this might lead to something more substantial than marching. Later, when my father was elected to the Illinois State Senate, I remember his telling my mother to get me ready to go to Springfield with him.

Charles N. Strevell also added a section about his acquaintance with the Lieutenant Governor of Illinois.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR DAUGHERTY

Arriving in Springfield, we located at the Chenery House. My father said, "You go across the street to the Nicolett and call on Governor Daugherty." I replied, saying, "Why, I don't want to call on Governor Daughterty." He then said, "You

do as I tell you," and I asked, "Well, what shall I do?" He answered, "You go to the counter in the hotel office and ask if Governor Daugherty is in. If he is, the young man will give you a blank card on which you will write your name. The bellboy will take it to the governor's room. If he comes back and tells you to go up to his room, do so."

I did all of these things. When I arrived in the governor's room there was a group of men standing talking and of course it was all Greek to me. The lieutenant governor spoke to me and said, "Please take a seat," which I did while the politicians continued to implore the governor for appointments. I cannot recall how or when I left the governor's room, but I do recall that on the following morning, in the local paper, I saw a notice of my appointment as Governor Daugherty's page.

I afterwards learned that my pay would be \$3.00 per diem, and that my father's would be \$2.50 per diem. \$2.50 for any businessman giving his time to the state nowadays seems a pitiful payment, when one recalls that Congress recently voted an extra payment or pension by an amendment of the Civil Service Act, which by the way, has drawn down on the heads of the members of Congress the wrath of the women of the country who are giving their sons to Uncle Sam's Army and Navy, many of whom the mothers will never see again. This resentment is so great and so many senators and representatives have heard "from home" that this act has now been repealed. No doubt many members of Congress will feel the effect of this at the fall elections.

I remember at the close of the legislative session my father said, "We'll go down to the Secretary of State's office." After conversing a short while, the Secretary of State remarked that he had wondered why I had not called before for the amount due me for page service.

Charles N. Strevell next worked as a page for Lieutenant Governor Early and he recounted in this chapter about that experience.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR EARLY

I again went to Springfield with my father who was still serving as a senator, and served as Lieutenant Governor Early's page, who had been elected in the meantime, replacing Governor Daugherty. Lieutenant Governor Early's daughter, a very handsome woman about eighteen, frequently asked me to ride with her when she went riding in her father's carriage driven by a colored coachman. When we came to Salt Lake City, we knew Mr. Dan Simmons, representing an Omaha wholesale house, and it has been a great disappointment that it was not until after her death that we learned that his wife was the Miss Early that I had known as a boy.

Mr. C. N. Strevell also recounted his father's role in having the boy's reformatory sited in Pontiac, Illinois.

ILLINOIS REFORMATORY

My father secured the passage of an act creating the Illinois State Reformatory. Young criminals were being sent to the state penitentiary where the contact with hardened criminals usually resulted in their taking up this life again when released. The object of the State Reformatory was the reformation of these young criminals with the hope of their becoming useful citizens. This institution was located at Pontiac. It was said to be a compliment to the author of the act. This reformatory is now known as a junior penitentiary with about 4,000 inmates.

In the second chapter of his book, Charles N. Strevell recounts the trip his family made from Pontiac, Illinois, to Miles City, Montana.

After two winters in Springfield, with school work interrupted, then taken up again, and nearly a year out with typhoid fever, at which time my death notice was published, I entered business for myself at seventeen. Broken in health at twenty, I was advised by the old family doctor to go West to a dry climate.

Father had been interested and was securing information about the Yellowstone country and made a trip of investigation, returning to Illinois. It was then decided that we would move to the Yellowstone. When we were leaving Chicago in the fall of 1879, father said, "We leave the final 'E' on the name here," and what had been "Strevelle" now became "Strevell."

En route to St. Paul, we stopped in Minnesota for a day with my mother's father, Dr. John Kelly. He had gone to California in 1849 and returned across the Isthmus with his fortune in \$20.00 gold pieces worn in a leather belt about his waist, as was the custom. After his return, he moved from Michigan to Minnesota, settling on Lake Peppin opposite the Maiden Rock which was on the Wisconsin side. It was from this rock that the Indian maiden, not being allowed to marry the Indian she loved, had jumped and was drowned in the lake.

More of Mrs. Jason Strevell's Poetry

Charles Strevell published three of his mother's poems in this book.

Mrs. Jason Strevell was fascinated by the sculpture of Nydia by America sculptor Randolph Rogers called Nydia, the Blind Flower Girl of Pompeii. She wrote the poem below in honor of Nydia.

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AS I RECALL THEM

NYDIA

"Fair Nydia! If thy pure cold lips could speak,
Methinks their melody would echo long,
In tremulous sweetness o'er my spirit break,
Inspiring thought with poetry and song.

If eyes, unsealed, could open to the light
As with a touch of risen sun at morn—
A modest flower that closed and slept at night
In milder, brighter rays was newly born.

And hand, unclasped, could touch the lyre to weave
With pleading, plaintive voice its tender tone,
But cease, vain longings; only God can give
The life, the soul. Man gives us sculptured stone.

The hand that gave thee wondrous grace is still,
His form, cold as the marble, lies a silent clod,
And yet he lives in thee our hearts to thrill,
And lift the soul to purity and God."

The second poem by Mrs. Jason Strevell is on page 123 of the book and is shown below.

"A TRIBUTE TO LABOR"

By Mrs. J. W. Strevell

Along the winding Yellowstone,
Where Red-men's feet were wont to tread,
'Tis dotted now with peaceful homes,
And ripened fields o'er valley spread.

O what hath man in patience wrought,
To thus transform these desert lands,
Until the products of the soil,
Have blessed the labor of his hands.

The arid plain, where cactus grew,
Is threaded now by waterways.
And "buds and blossoms, as the rose,"
And yields its fruit these Autumn days.

Wise Providence, in Nature hid
The forces to supply man's need,
In "sweat of brow," he brings it forth,
As God in Paradise decreed.

He turns the water from the stream,
He tills the soil, and plants the vine,
And takes the hoarded wealth of hills,
To warm and cheer, in winter time.

And peace and plenty, earned by toil,
Is better far than fame or gold,
And flocks and herds, and bounteous store,
Will crown the years with joy untold.

The third poem by Mrs. Jason Strevell is on page 302 of the book.

MOUNT SHASTA

By Mrs. J. W. Strevell

Majestic mountain, on whose lofty crest,
I almost fancy angels poise in flight;
Unite with Nature's harmonies, to bless
And praise thy Maker in His matchless might.

The plaintive notes of woodland bird below
The breeze that wakes the tuneful pine's deep sigh,
Loud anthems; when the thunder shakes thy brow,
All Nature speaks the praise of God most high.

I fain would linger near and gaze upon
Thy kingly splendor and thy robes of light,
Forget the lesser things, and feast my soul
On Nature's nobler works, nor wish the night.

Unwearied hours of autumn afternoon,
I looked with wonder on thy majesty sublime.
And now the starlit heavens and full-orbed moon,
On thy resplendent beauty faintly shine.

Farewell, thou monarch of the rocky realm,
I leave thee in thy wondrous glory fair,
And dimly gaze upon thee from afar,
As day and night alike thy glory share.

CHAPTER 17

1944 to 1954

Photo of Strevell House Circa 1940s



Richard Tallman is the man in the photo.

Porches

Note that this 1940s photo shows a large front porch and a screened in porch on the west kitchen. It is believed these porches were added to the house sometime after 1900. They are not typical of the Carpenter Gothic architecture used on the original home.

The current front porch is believed to be more typical of Carpenter Gothic architecture per research into other Carpenter Gothic homes.

Strevell Family Genealogy Documented by Charles Nettleton Strevell and Donated to University of Utah

This document is believed to have been written by Charles Nettleton Strevell sometime between the 1930 death of Jason Miles and 1947 when C. N. Strevell died. A copy was filed in the University of Utah Library. A copy of the original document can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/bdfuh5rr.

THE STREVELLS

Our branch of the family was fathered by Jason Weston Strevell, who was born in New York State in 1832. His father was born in France, his mother in Germany; they lived on a farm 20 miles west of Albany, capitol of the state.

After reading law in the office of Lyman Tremain, a noted New York lawyer, Jason decided to go west, and locate at Pontiac, Illinois where he entered the hardware business; and for a few years was a hardware merchant, the practice of law to be taken up later. My mother, Elizabeth Butler Kelly, daughter of Dr. John Kelly of Constantine, Michigan, and who had married Zelus H. Nettleton, were living at Pontiac, Illinois at this time. Their children, John, Mary, and Charles were of this union, and sometime after her husband passed away, mother was married to Jason W. Strevell.

A daughter, Helen Louise Strevell, proved to be a natural musician. In 1868 father was elected to the State Senate of Illinois. I accompanied him to Springfield and was the Lieutenant Governor's Page for two sessions of the legislature.

In 1879 the family, father and mother, Helen and I, moved from Illinois to Miles City, Montana. We soon became acquainted with Mr. George M. Miles, and in the spring of 1881, Helen and George were married. A few weeks later, Charles left for Illinois and he and Elizabeth Crawford were married at Pontiac, Illinois. In the spring of 1882, their son was born and named Willie C. Strevell. A week later, a son was born to Helen and George and named Jason Daniel Miles.

Everyone being busy, the years passed quickly. In 1887 Helen passed away, and in 1889 Willie passed away. Jay went to a Boys' school in Wisconsin, and later graduated from Princeton. He married Miss Mildred Cable of Covington, Ohio. Their two children, Cable and Elizabeth, after completing their education; Cable at Princeton, then entering business in New York City, and Elizabeth at Clairmont and other Girls' schools, is now with the Assistance League at Los Angeles. Their father, Jay, passed away in 1930.

Charles and Elizabeth moved to Utah and are now living in Salt Lake City. Father and mother continued to live in Miles City, and mother passed away in 1902; father in 1903. Helen and her son Jay, having passed away, Cable and Elizabeth are the only living direct descendants beginning with Jason Weston Strevell.

Comments on the University of Utah Strevell Genealogy Document

This is the only known source of the first name of Mary for the only daughter of Zelus Nettleton and Elizabeth Kelly. Mary likely lived between 1850 and 1860. There are no known records for her birth or death.

This is also one of the few sources documenting that Z. H. Nettleton's first name was Zelus Nettleton.

Charles Nettleton Strevell Dies in 1947

The September 22, 1947, issue of the Salt Lake Telegram newspaper in Salt Lake City, Utah, published the obituary below.

UTAH COLLECTOR OF RELICS DIES

Funeral arrangements were being made Monday for Charles Nettleton Strevell, 89, 105 E. South Temple, well known collector of historical relics and retired president of Strevell-Paterson Hardware Co., who died in a Salt Lake hospital Sunday at 4:25 P.M. of causes incident to age.

Mr. Strevell was born June 3, 1858, at Pontiac, Ill., a son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Strevell, and received his early education in Pontiac. Later he moved with his family to Miles City, Montana, where he established a retail hardware business with a brother-in-law, George C. Miles.

Moving to Ogden in 1890, he organized a retail hardware store there and later moved his business to Salt Lake City, where he consolidated with the George M. Scott Co. The company was known as the Scott-Strevell Hardware Co. Mr. Scot retired in 1903 and the firm became the Strevell-Paterson Hardware Co. Mr. Strevell was also president of the Independent Coal and Coke Co. He retired as president of the hardware company in 1931.

Known for his rare collection of historic, geologic and archaeological relics and specimens, he began his collection as a youth in Miles City, when he hunted curious objects in order to study their oddities and scientific value.

Mr. and Mrs. Strevell presented the collection to the Salt Lake City board of education May 9, 1939, and it was placed in the east wing of Lafayette school, 61 E. North Temple. The donation was in honor of the couple's only son, Willie C. Strevell, who died in 1899.

Also known for his works as an author, he had written "Strevell Museum," a story of his search for and the collection of relics, and "As I Recalled Them," a story of early western days.

His only survivor is his widow Elizabeth Crawford Strevell.



Charles Nettleton Strevell was buried at Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery with his other family members.

Mrs. Charles Strevell Dies in 1950

Her obituary was published in the March 11, 1950, edition of the Deseret News.

Services Slated Monday For Mrs. Strevell

Funeral services for Mrs. Elizabeth Crawford Strevell, 94, have been arranged for Monday at 12:15 p.m. at 574 East First South Street.

Mrs. Strevell, widow of Charles Nettleton Strevell, co-founder of Strevell-Paterson Hardware Company, died at her home, 105 East South Temple St., Friday afternoon of causes incident to age.

The services will be conducted by the Rev. W. Malcolm Gwaltney of the First Presbyterian Church. Friends may call at the place of services Saturday evening, Sunday, and until noon Monday. The body will be taken to Chicago for burial.

**Total Number of Strevell and Associated Miles Family Buried at Rosehill Cemetery
in Chicago from FindAGrave.com.**

Charles Nettleton Strevell
1858 to 1947

Elizabeth "Lizzie" Crawford Strevell
1856 to 1950

Elizabeth B. Kelly Strevell
1828 to 1902

Judge Jason Woolrick Strevell
1832 to 1903

Willie C. Strevell
1882 to 1889

Helen Strevell Miles
1860 to 1887

Jason Daniel Miles
1882 to 1930

George Melville Miles
1854 to 1935

Laura Ritner Miles
1871 to 1943

Mary Curtis Miles
1903 to 1904

1954 Pantagraph Article About Lincoln and Pontiac

The February 13, 1954, issue of the Pantagraph has a story about Abraham Lincoln and Pontiac, Illinois.

Pontiac Home Has Bit of Lincoln Lore

Book by Former Resident Recalls Lost Lecture

By: Charlotte Fleshman, Pantagraph Reporter in Pontiac

PONTIAC — (PNS) — Every city in Illinois enjoys claiming a link with Abraham Lincoln and the details are generally brought out of an airing around the time of the Great Emancipator's birthday anniversary.

Pontiac is no exception. It claims the distinction of having contributed to Lincoln-iana through Charles Nettleton Strevell, Pontiac native, who sat upon Lincoln's knee as a child in Pontiac.

Strevell was a page for the Governor of Illinois when Grant was president of the republic; he homesteaded in Montana, where he went for his health; he was a merchant in Miles City, Montana, during an epoch of frontier turbulence; he was a dealer in wholesale and retail hardware in Ogden and Salt Lake City; he was an amateur archaeologist and life-long collector of historical and geological curios, and he was a philanthropist in Utah.

Well Known in West

According to Noble Warrum Sr., editorial writer of "The Salt Lake Tribune," Strevell saw with his own eyes many incidents and characters of other days which might be forgotten altogether or lack verification if had they not been recorded by Strevell in his book, "As I Recall Them."

In a forward to Strevell's book, Warrum wrote that towns and mining camps in the West had been named for Strevell, a flourishing business in Salt Lake City still bears his name, and a museum of art, curios, fossils and historical relics collected by Mr. Strevell was donated to the public schools of Salt Lake City and dedicated in the memory of Strevell's only child, a son who died at a young age.

As he wrote the introduction, Mr. Warrum described Strevell as dignified and sprightly, immaculately groomed, amiable, calm and kindly, concluding that he was one of the "most optimistic conservatives to be met in one life time."

The book, published but a few years before Strevell's death, which took place shortly after World War II, opens with a description of Abraham Lincoln's visit in the Pontiac home of his parents, State Senator and Mrs. J. W. Strevell.

Interior Changed

This house now is owned by Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Tallman, who have remodeled the interior in recent years but who have left the exterior as they found it. In the remodeling, the bedroom in which Lincoln slept has been transformed into a kitchen. The sitting room, in which Lincoln and Senator Strevell talked politics late into the night, was converted into a dining room at first by the Tallmans, but has since been changed back into a sitting room.

The author was two years old when Lincoln came to Pontiac in January, 1860, to deliver a lecture. "The Wheel and Axle." Senator and Mrs. Strevell (who then spelled their name Strevelle, held a reception for Lincoln in their home after the lecture.

Following the reception, Lincoln and Senator Strevell sat in the sitting room and conversed on politics after the family had retired. The question of Abe's height arose and Senator Strevell measured Lincoln at six feet four inches, cutting a notch on the door casing.

Forty-one years later, Senator Strevell's son, who was collecting Lincoln-iana, wrote his father for his recollections of that evening, and in his later book, he printed Senator Strevell's letter in its entirety.

Lincoln Lecture Lost

Senator Strevell wrote, on March 21, 1901, that the young men of Pontiac, in the Winter before Abe was nominated for president, had undertaken to maintain a lecture course, such as was the vogue at that time. Among the lecturers secured was Mr. Lincoln.

"I introduced him to a very large audience, and before introducing him," wrote Senator Strevell, "I asked him what subject I should announce for his lecture and he replied, "The Wheel and the Axle." That lecture, though one of the most interesting I ever heard before or since, was never found in his papers; it was a written lecture but no trace of it was ever obtained after his death.

He was entertained at our house during the night, and, after the lecture, there was a general reception, a large number of citizens of the town calling upon him during the evening. After the reception had closed and all of our family except Mr. Lincoln and myself retired, he and I sat up until about midnight, in conversation, a great deal of which I could repeat here, but it is not necessary to do so.

Notched Doorway

"I do not know, nor have I been able to remember at all, what incident it was brought up the subject of his height. He said that he was six feet four; I told him that it scarcely seemed possible to me that he was four inches taller than myself.

"I am just six feet. "But at all events," he said, "you can take my height if you wish": and I did so, he standing with his back to the door casing which you now have, and I taking the measure with great caution. I think with a two foot rule. I remember very distinctly when I was placing the rule on top of his head to get as near a perfect level as I could, noticing how heavy and coarse his black hair was. He had a heavy head of hair and it was very coarse and black.

"The measure was taken in his stocking feet; he had some time previous to that pulled off his boots, and he proved to be just the height you will find on the door casing, which I think is exactly six feet four."

"The time of which I am speaking was in the troublous days of slavery and anti-slavery, and one portion of the country was in sentiment entirely arrayed against the other, the North against the South, and the heated condition of the public mind soon eventuated in the clash of arms between the North and the South.

Predicted Nomination

"Our conversation was largely upon this subject, I said to him, "I believe you will be nominated for president at the approaching convention in Chicago." I did not know then, what his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith afterwards told me was true, that he did not like to have anyone say to him that he would be nominated; I suppose that it was upon the ground that there was a great deal of talk which he himself regarded as flippant and much of it said, perhaps, with a mere idea to please him. This he did not like. In answer he asked me with a rather stern countenance why I said that.

"I soon gave him proof that I did not say it without what I regarded as a good reason for doing so; he and Douglas had their, joint debate two years before. I said to him, "'Douglas will be nominated at Baltimore and the people will never be satisfied until you and he have had this contest cut on a broader field than the one in which you were engaged in your joint debate." This was a conviction of mine, and I think it immediately addressed itself to him as a conviction.

Foresaw Convention Fight

"Well," he said, "what you say of Mr. Douglas being nominated at Baltimore may be true, and it may not, but I can tell you one thing, he will not be nominated without a great fight."

The event proved how much better he understood the situation than I did. The convention at Baltimore resulted in a tremendous fight and a split, but he said, "Even if what you say should turn out to be true. I do not see how that would necessitate my nomination as you seem to think."

"He then said, which his brother-in-law, Mr. Smith, stated to me afterwards was probably as much as he ever said to anyone, "I have thought that I might be named for the second place on the ticket but not for anything higher."

"In talking in relation to this matter as he had presented it, I asked him who would, in his judgment, be nominated. He said, "I think Mr. Seward will be nominated." His prediction that Seward would be nominated would have proven to be entirely true had it not been for Horace Greeley who went into the convention as an alternate from one of the western territories.

Invited to White House

"I often met Mr. Lincoln during my residence in Illinois and had many conversations with him in relation to professional and political subjects. I was a member of a state Republican convention in which it was decided unanimously to present his name at Chicago.

"I never saw Mr. Lincoln alive after his election, but your mother and myself received an autographed letter written entirely in his own hand urging us to visit him at the White House, but that visit was never made."

Yours, (signed) J. W. Strevell

Other correspondence included in Charles Strevell's book are the March 20, 1872, letter from Jesse W. Fell of Normal, asking Lincoln for a brief history of his life, and Lincoln's autobiography supplied to Mr. Fell.

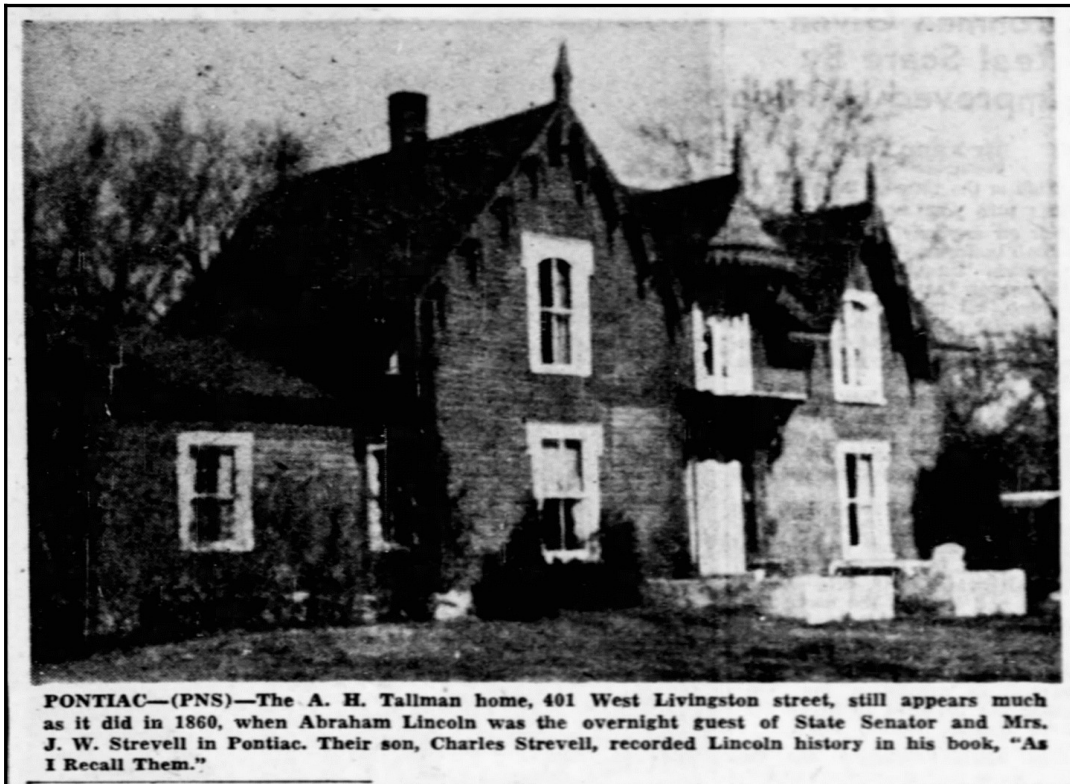
According to the author, Fell's daughter bequeathed the original of Lincoln's autobiography to Herbert Hoover. Prior to presentation, Mr. Strevell writes, the original was kept in a bank vault in Normal.

Other correspondence from Senator Strevell also is reproduced in the book. An autographed copy of the book, inscribed "To Samuel E. and Gladys Sims, my old Illinois friends," is owned by Gladys Sims Erickson of Pontiac.

Friends of Strevell's

Mrs. Erickson's grandfather, Judge Nathaniel J. Pillsbury, who was a member of the appellate court for 18 years, was a close friend of Senator Strevell. Mrs. Erickson's father, Samuel E. Sims, who audited McLean county for years prior to his death in 1945, and Mrs. Erickson's mother, who organized the Chief Pontiac chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, in 1927, the same year in which she died, were intimate friends of the Charles Strevell. Charles' wife, the former Elizabeth Crawford, was reared in a home located where the Greyhound Bus Station now is located in Pontiac, one block from the Strevell home.

Mrs. Erickson, who still resides in Pontiac, and her grandfather visited the Strevells in Salt Lake City in 1915, shortly before Judge Pillsbury's death. Mrs. Erickson and her mother were members of the Letitia Green Stevenson chapter, DAR, in Bloomington, before Mrs. Sims organized the Pontiac chapter in 1927. Mrs. Erickson succeeded her mother as regent, following her mother's death, and was regent at the time a Lincoln memorial marker was placed on the First Presbyterian Church here, where Lincoln had made his speech.



The original caption is hard to read, so it is retyped below in modern type.

PONTIAC — (PNS) —The A. H. Tallman home, 401 West Livingston street, still appears much as it did in 1860, when Abraham Lincoln was the overnight guest of State Senator and Mrs. J. W. Strevell in Pontiac. Their son, Charles Strevell, recorded Lincoln history in his book, "As I Recall Them."



HISTORIC ROOM—Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Tallman read in their sitting room, where 96 years ago, Abraham Lincoln sat in conversation with State Senator J. W. Strevell, who owned the house at that time. It was in this room that Lincoln was measured by his host, who was doubtful that Lincoln stood six feet four inches, but who found that measurement was correct when he notched Lincoln's height on a door casing.

Fleshman Photo

HISTORIC ROOM—Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Tallman read in their sitting room, where 96 years ago, Abraham Lincoln sat in conversation with State Senator J. W. Strevell, who owned the house at that time. It was in this room that Lincoln was measured by his host, who was doubtful that Lincoln stood six feet four inches, but who found that measurement was correct when he notched Lincoln's height on a door casing.

Error in 1954 Pantagraph Article

The article recounted that Lincoln spent the night at the Strevell House. Based upon 1860 train schedules, it is now believed that Lincoln did not spend the night in the house. He spent the afternoon and evening hours until he left to catch his train to Bloomington.

CHAPTER 18

1955 to 2007

After the Tallman's lived in the Strevell House at 401 West Livingston Street in Pontiac, ownership of the house changed several times.

Eventually the house was converted into an apartment building. Both the exterior and interior of the home decayed to the point where the home was a candidate to be knocked down and replaced with a new house in 2007.

CHAPTER 19

2008 to 2018

House Saved From the Wrecking Ball in 2008

In early 2008, Tom Ewing became aware that the house at 401 West Livingston Street had historical significance because of Abraham Lincoln spending the evening with Jason Strevell.

Each December, the Historical Society tries to have a special meeting in December to close out each year. For the December 2007 meeting, Guy Fraker was invited to be the guest speaker. Mr. Fraker spoke about his first Lincoln related book.

At that meeting, Mr. Ewing explained to Mr. Fraker that the home at 401 West Livingston was the only property remaining in Livingston County that had any physical connection to Abraham Lincoln.

Mr. Fraker's admonition to the Society was that we should make every effort to save this property. He explained that towns like Decatur and Champaign had many properties connected with Lincoln, but all of them have been torn down and redeveloped. Mr. Fraker said there were few towns left which have any actual physical properties which can be tied to a visit of Abraham Lincoln. This conversation is documented by an August 11, 2008, letter from Tom Ewing to Mr. Louis Lyons. A copy of this letter can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/4tbdjna3.

On September 9, 2008, three Pontiac citizens got together and purchased the house at 401 West Livingston for \$40,000 per Livingston County tax assessor records. The three Pontiac citizens were Donovan Gardner, Tom Ewing, and Collins Miller. These three citizens purchased the home with the intent of restoring it and then donating it to the Livingston County Historical Society.

It took ten years to renovate the home and prepare it for the grand opening ceremony in 2018. No specific written log was kept of the various steps of the house renovation. Fortunately, the Bloomington Pantagraph wrote and published periodic updates on the progress of the home restoration. These articles will serve as the "construction log" for the Strevell House refurbishment project.

Strevell Home Purchased and to be Renovated

The September 27, 2008, Pantagraph ran its first story about the acquisition and renovation of the Strevell house in Pontiac.

Pontiac group buys home with Lincoln connection

By Tony Sapochetti

PONTIAC — A local group has bought a 19th century home with strong ties to Abraham Lincoln as a way to preserve the past and commemorate history.

"It is important to save part of our historic past for future generations," Collins Miller of Pontiac said in a release. "It is a valuable educational tool as well as a tourism attraction for our city. There is a lot of enthusiasm for the project."

The home of Jason W. Strevell, 401 W. Livingston St., was purchased by Miller and fellow Livingston County Historical Society members Tom Ewing and Donovan Gardner. The plan is to pay off the purchase through donations and donate the building to the city.

Gardner said the house can be traced to a visit from Lincoln on Jan. 27, 1860, after he gave a speech to a local church. At the time, Lincoln was representing a client in a Bloomington trial, and came to Strevell's house for refreshments and conversation with civic leaders. Most notably, Gardner said, the issue of Lincoln's true height was in question as Strevell was 6 feet 2 inches tall and did not believe the future president's height of 6 feet 4 inches.

Lincoln stood in a door frame and Strevell measured the distance with a two-foot ruler, marking off Lincoln's height as 6 feet 4 inches. Gardner said Strevell took the door frame with the markings with him when he moved to Montana in 1879. Reports indicate the frame was donated to the Salt Lake City School Board in 1939, but since was lost.

Strevell established himself as a leading attorney in Pontiac after he settled in the city in 1855. He was elected twice to the Illinois House of Representatives and served four years in the Illinois Senate. He drafted a bill that led to the creation of the State Reformatory in Pontiac, now the Pontiac Correctional Center, and presented Lincoln with the Republican presidential nomination in 1860 while he was on the state committee, Gardner said.

"For the short-term future, we will need to stabilize the heat and electrical systems so they don't endanger the house," Gardner said. "We also need to restore the outside of the house. The first stage is to get the outside cleaned up so we can make it an attractive drive-by."

Gardner said the house will be a part of the "Looking for Lincoln" initiative, which provides wayside exhibits and historical markers from Lincoln's life.

To make a donation or to volunteer, call Gardner at (815) 848-1864 or Pontiac Tourism at (815) 844-5847.

Photo of Strevell House Shortly After It Was Purchased in 2008



Old House Expert Hired to Examine the Strevell House

The Livingston County Historical Society hired Tom Vance to come to Pontiac and review the Strevell House. His report is shown below.

Preliminary Report on The Jason Strevell House Located in Pontiac, Illinois

August 14, 2009

By Tom Vance

Introduction and Background

I was contacted by Donovan Gardner of Pontiac, Illinois to look at and evaluate the Jason Strevell House located at 401 W. Livingston Street in Pontiac. I met with Mr. Gardner along with Tom Ewing, and Collins Miller both also of Pontiac on Wednesday, August 5th, to go through the house. They along with some other investors had recently purchased the house, which had previously been subdivided into rental units. The House is historically significant due to a documented visit by Abraham Lincoln in January of 1860 for which a Looking for Lincoln sign has been installed in the front yard. The house is also very striking from an architectural standpoint.

Questions to be addressed in an evaluation of the house include the following:

1. What part or parts of the house are original and which are later materials and/or additions?
2. What was the original configuration of the house?
3. What are the approximate date or dates of construction?
4. What is needed to restore the house and how do we proceed?
5. What should be done with the house after it is restored?

During my visit on August 3rd, we also toured the 1858 Jones House, which is owned by the Livingston County Historical Society. This historic house has been restored and it provided a number of insights relating to the Strevell House.

Preliminary Findings

These findings are preliminary based on a cursory examination of the house. Some things were easily determinable, but a more thorough examination after the removal of carpeting, wall paneling, drop ceilings,

etc. will be necessary to confirm and fill in details. Also some of the conclusions offered in this preliminary report may change as a result.

Zelus Nettleton originally owned the house. After Zelus' death in 1857, his widow married Jason Strevell in 1858 and he then became owner. The house is constructed in the Cottage Gothic style of architecture, common and popular during the 1840s - 1870s period. It was probably built utilizing balloon frame construction, is one and a half stories with central hallways and one and a half rooms in depth. The house faces south. There is a one-story ell projecting from the backside of the house and a smaller room is attached to the west side of the house.

Cottage Gothic features include the steep pitch of the roof, the scroll-sawn bargeboards, the window hoods, the finials and the asymmetrical form of the house. Two over two (2/2) windows are found on the front and east side and six over six (6/6) windows are found on the back and other places on the house. The front door is a set of double doors with tall windows in the upper halves and nice decorative features. The upper hallway and south-facing window of the upper Southeast room also feature sets of double glass doors.

Early pictures of the house show a large front porch which was removed possibly in the 1950s leaving a small stoop and stoop roof supported by decorative scroll sawn brackets which are repeated on the second story. The interior features a nice original staircase, the banister of which has been refinished and mostly original woodwork and doors through out all of which have been painted. Later paneling, carpet, drop ceilings and other recent materials conceal most of the floors, walls and ceilings. An area inside a later closet in the upstairs indicates that the floor has also been painted, at least in that room.

Dating the House

An information flier on the house indicates a construction date of 1854. In looking at the house, however, this date conflicted with the two over two windows and other features, which did not come into general use until the 1860s. Further investigation, however, indicated that the west section of the house was built at an earlier date, possibly the 1854 date, and the east wing and rear ell at a later date.

One possible scenario would be the construction of the early part of the house by Zelus Nettleton (we need to check on when he bought the property and for how much) and the addition of the east wing, rear ell and Gothic Cottage features by Jason Strevell sometime after he acquired the property in 1858. An 1869 bird's eye view of Pontiac shows that the expansion of the house was definitely completed by that year.

Original Configuration of the House

The original house was a story and a half, one and a half rooms over one and a half rooms. The room attached to the west side of the house is also part of the original construction. A quick look in the basement indicated hand hewn sill beams on this part of the house. In the attic, the roof rafters and supports of the east wing were obviously attached on top of the shingles of the original roof, confirming the east wing's status as a later addition.

The rear ell extends from the early part of the house, but seems to be a later addition, probably concurrent with the east wing. A more thorough examination of the sills and other features should shed more light on this.

Interior Doors and Woodwork

Most of the doors and woodwork in the interior are original. The stairway banister has been refinished to natural wood, but almost everything else is painted. Modern wall paneling and other more recent wall coverings abound and several rooms have drop ceilings. Most doors are four-panel and date from the addition of the east wing. There are two two-panel doors that probably date from the early house. These also have smaller rectangular box locks in comparison to the larger square box locks on the four-panel doors.

Most of the woodwork matches and also matches the woodwork in the 1858 Jones House. The woodwork in the original house is slightly different than that of the later east wing, and that in the small west room is quite different from any of the other woodwork. The floors are mostly covered with carpet, but most of the original floor is probably underneath, although it is probably painted, at least where it is exposed in an upstairs closet.

Room Configuration

East Wing — The main downstairs room was probably the parlor or drawing room. There is a small, narrower room behind it of as yet undetermined use. A wide, arched door that has been partially filled in with shelving separates the two. A bathroom has been added in one end of the smaller room.

Upstairs are two bedrooms. A modern closet has been added to the front bedroom otherwise they are mostly original.

Original House — The configuration of this section is less clear. There was a smaller room behind the main room that is now serving as a bathroom. A large opening between the two has been filled in with bookshelves. Either this small room or the smaller attached west room initially served as the kitchen. There may have been a fireplace in one or both of these rooms.

The upstairs rooms are a couple of steps down from the floor level of the east wing. The back portion of the upstairs has been converted to a bathroom. The wall dividing the upstairs includes an early two-panel door and may be an original wall. Evidence of the chimney and original stair to the second floor should be evident once later carpet is removed.

Rear Ell Addition — This appears to have been added at the same time as the East Wing. It has matching woodwork and the foundation is the same stonework. This was probably the kitchen for the re-configured house. It has more recently been modernized.

There is a small room off the ell that was added even later in the 19th century based on its brick foundation and different woodwork.

Exterior Doors and Windows

There are basically two types of sash windows on the house, 6/6 and 2/2. The 6/6 windows probably date from the original house and the 2/2 windows date from the East Wing addition. 6/6 windows are still found on the upper backside of the original house. Other 6/6 windows on the back may have been moved and re-used from other locations on the original house.

The front or south side of the original house would have originally had 6/6 windows, probably two windows above and two below or window and a door below. This will be determined by looking at the original framing of the south wall. The exterior door may also have been around the corner where the hallway door is now and there probably were windows on the east side of the original house.

The 2/2 windows on the East Wing and on the front of the original house date from the East Wing construction. 1/1 windows have replaced some of the 2/2 front windows on the front of the house. The double front doors and double glass doors in the upstairs hall and upstairs bedroom are original.

Exterior Trim & Siding

Most of the siding seems to be in good condition. Traces of red paint can be seen on the siding and trim. More thorough paint analysis should provide a color scheme. Generally the siding and trim were of contrasting colors. The gable end finials need to be reconstructed, but the bargeboard trim and other woodwork appear to need only some repairs.

Chimneys and Fireplace

The original chimneys have been removed, but in looking at the underside of the roofs, there seems to have been a chimney in the middle of the original house and one in the middle of the addition. Further examination will need to be made of the attics, ceilings and walls to determine an exact configuration of the chimneys. Further examination of the small west room and rear ell including attic and crawl space, also needs to be made to determine the presence of a chimney or fireplace as one of those rooms likely served as a kitchen.

Basement & Foundations

There is a basement underneath the main part of the house and crawl spaces under the west room and rear ell. The basement seems to be original to at least when the East Wing was added and there may have been a basement under the original house. There is evidence of an opening in the north basement wall of the early house that may have been the original basement entrance. The basement walls are constructed of stone. In addition, a brick shelf was added around the inside of the basement wall, probably for storage of crocks and food supplies.

Next Step

The next step would involve removing modern materials from the interior of the house to allow us to better determine the original configuration and what will be necessary for restoration. I can then return and do a more thorough investigation.

Steps to take would include the following:

1. Remove carpeting, wall paneling, drop ceilings and other modern materials.
2. Remove kitchen and bathroom fixtures. These you might want to salvage and possibly re-use some in adaptive use areas depending on intended use(s) for the house.

3. Take out built in bookshelves, but be careful about getting into original woodwork. You'll know by the square nails.
4. Check abstract for the date Zelus Nettleton purchased the property and transaction amount. Was he first owner?
5. See if there are any surviving tax records for the 1850s and 60s. The addition of the East Wing should have increased taxes.
6. Check for any Strevell family or business records, newspaper ads from the 1850s & 60s, and any other information that might give clues to the house.

Further Analysis of the House — Things to check

1. Basement & Crawl spaces — check sills, check for fireplace foundations, opening on north side of original basement wall, saw marks and differences in floor joists, original floor openings, etc.
2. Original house — check for timber frame construction, check south and east walls for window and door openings in framework, check for original room configuration on floor, walls, etc., check for location and configuration of the chimney, and possible fireplace, check woodwork differences.
3. West room — check floor, walls, ceiling for original door/window configuration, evidence of fireplace, etc.
4. East wing — Check arch between rooms, check ceiling, upstairs floors, ceiling, attic for evidence of the chimney and its configuration, check floors, walls, ceilings for any other evidence.
5. Rear ell — Check floor, walls, ceiling, attic for original configuration, chimney, added or missing walls, etc.
6. Further analyze small extra room for original fabric and dating.
7. Take paint samples in for analysis.
8. Research 1850s & 60 architecture books for construction details, room use, window styles, etc.

For Further consideration

1. Begin thinking about long-range options for the house. You talked about it eventually going to the city or Historical Society. If so, it would

be good to get them involved in the process and to gain their input on restoration and long-range objectives. How would this house tie in with the other two historic houses in town?

2. Do you want to restore it strictly as a period house, or include some adaptive use? A period house would still need a modern bathroom and possibly an office/staff area. Another option could be a small apartment for an intern or caretaker.

3. Do you want to consider other options such as a bed & breakfast, space for "Victorian receptions" etc?

4. What are the possible uses and objectives for the building behind the house?

5. You may want to consider the services of an architect to draw up your plans. It is important to have an architect and building contractor who are attuned to historic restoration and open to non-conventional ways of doing things.

6. Power Point Presentation — I can incorporate the information from the final report into a power point presentation for presentation to the Historical Society or City officials.

7. Web Site — A web site is good for the promotion of any project. I can work with your web designer or we could do it through Webcraft Design here locally.

Estimated Consultant Costs

Visit on August 5

Time on site 6 hrs. @ \$25/hr. \$150.00

Travel time (one way) 2 hrs @ \$25/hr. 50.00

Preparation of report 4 hrs. @ \$25/hr. 100.00

Mileage 250 mi. @ .30/mile 75.00 \$375.00

Follow up visit Time on site 6-8 hours

Travel Time 2 hours Mileage 250 miles

Research and preparation of the final report 4-6 hours

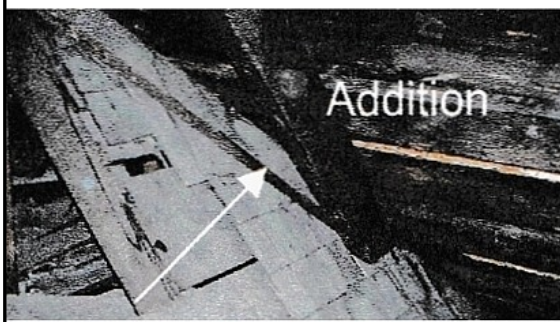
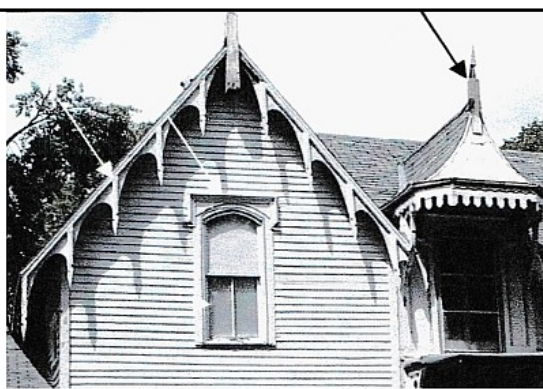
Other visits, presentations, research, consulting, etc. as requested

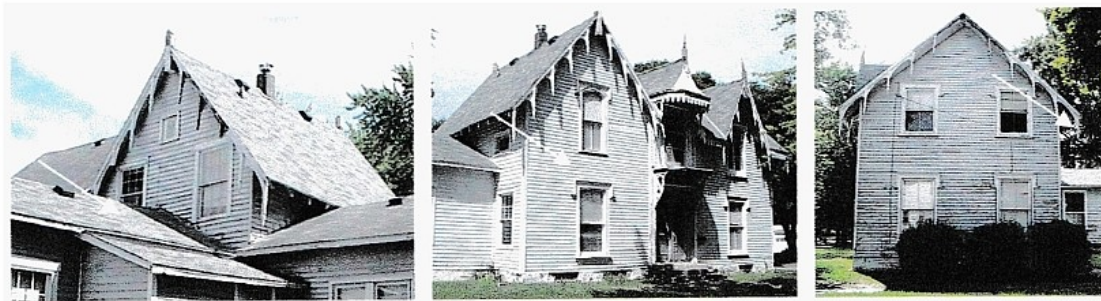
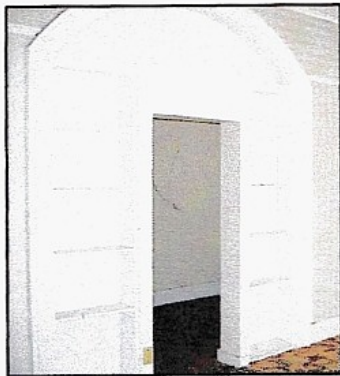
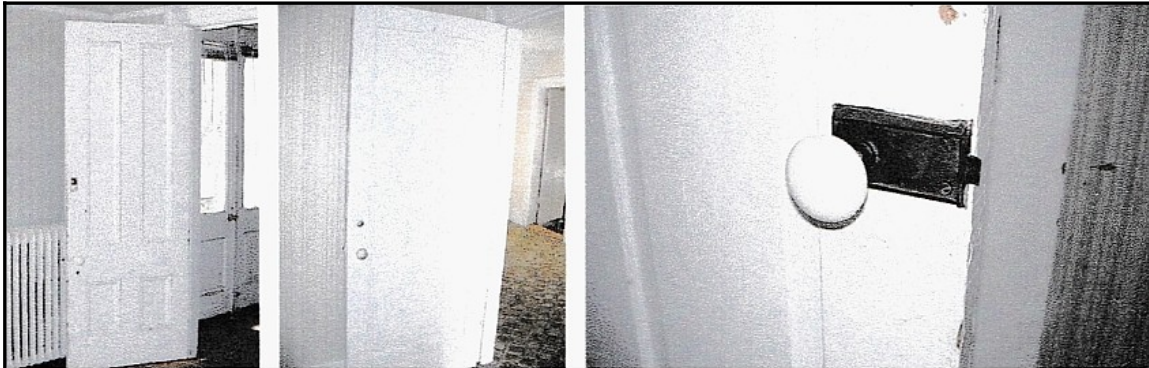
Preparation of a Power Point Program 4-6 hours

Thank you for the opportunity to be involved in the Strevell House project.

Tom Vance,
Historic Consultant 1314 Audrey Lane Charleston, IL 61920
217-348-8603
tsevance@mchsi.com

Images Used in 2009 Vance Report





Exterior Photos of the Home Circa 2009



Update on Renovation of the Strevell House One Year After Acquisition

The Pantagraph published an article on December 14, 2009, about 14 months after it was purchased for the Livingston County Historical Society.

Home with Lincoln ties to get revamp

By Tony Sapochetti

PONTIAC — Efforts are under way to restore the last remaining house in Livingston County that has a tie to Abraham Lincoln.

The Livingston County Historical Society wants to extensively remodel the Jason W. Strevell house, 401 W. Livingston St., which was an apartment building before the society bought it a year ago.

Society member Donovan Gardner said the group wants to bring the house back to its original glory.

"We are trying to make it historically accurate," he said. "It's a unique house, and there is really no other house in town like it."

The society is looking for volunteers and for money; the exterior work is estimated at \$100,000. Work should start next summer.

The society already has found that the 1850 house was built in two parts, with Strevell enlarging the original when he bought it.

The Albany, New York lawyer settled in Pontiac in 1855 and married the widow of the owner, who died before moving into the house.

Strevell also adopted her son, and the couple had a daughter of their own, Gardner said. Strevell later became active in state politics.

Legend has it that Lincoln visited the house before he was president. In a dispute over Lincoln's height, he was measured against a door frame where his height was marked.

Strevell collected the door frame and other Lincoln artifacts, eventually donating them to schools and universities in Utah. The items have since disappeared.

Walldogs Visit Pontiac in 2009

Per a Pantagraph article published on June 20, 2009, the Walldogs were scheduled to visit Pontiac from June 25 to June 28. The Walldogs visited Pontiac on those dates and they painted 18 murals in downtown Pontiac.

One of the 18 murals was a depiction of the Strevell House in Pontiac. This mural is located on the side of a building at the northeast corner of East Washington Street and North Main Street.

A photo of the mural being painted in 2009 is shown below.



Historical Society Has Party at Strevell House Project in 2010

The Pantagraph ran a story on September 25, 2010, describing this party.

Restoration group sets party

Pontiac — The Livingston County Historical Society will celebrate the Strevell-Lincoln House restoration project at 10 a.m. Monday in front of the house, 401 West Livingston St.

The house was built in the 1850s in the Gothic style. It was home to the Jason W. Strevell family beginning in 1856.

The attorney, state representative and state senator was a close friend to Abraham Lincoln, who spent time at the house.

The privately funded project will begin with the facade and then move indoors.

Dialectic Society Donates Funds for Strevell House Project

The September 28, 2010, Pontiac Daily Leader ran a story about the Strevell project. It is shown below.

Historic Home Needs Funds

By Sheila Shelton

The Livingston County Historical Society and the Strevell House Restoration Committee on Monday morning announced a fundraising program that will feature a memorial brick walkway at the Strevell house at 401 W. Livingston St.

In 2008 Donovan Gardner, Collins Miller and Tom Ewing purchased the Pontiac home when they thought the previous owner was planning to have it razed.

In 2009, ownership of the home was transferred to the Livingston County Historical Society. "Today we are announcing our first fundraising effort for this home," Ewing said. "The exterior of the home is going to be where our first work will go. The side-walk and the front entrance will need about \$60,000 (worth of work). In that sum we will also need to strip paint from the house, take out windows, work on them and have them put back in. When that work is completed work can begin on the inside."

The front of the house has an old brick sidewalk in front of it that is in disrepair. "The fundraising effort will focus on selling marble bricks that will range in cost from \$100 to \$5,000," said Miller.

Ewing said not only is this house important for its association with the former president, but on its own merits as its 1854 Gothic style architecture.

"This was the last remaining structure in which Abraham Lincoln stayed. All of the other homes in Livingston County in which he stayed have been razed," Ewing said. "There were several homes that he stayed in this county because Lincoln was young lawyer traveling the 8th Judicial Circuit."

The long-term restoration project will rely on private funding and when completed will be used as a museum and a home for the Historical Society



Betty Estes, right, and Barbara Sancken presented a check to Collins Miller on behalf of the Dialectic Society to be used in renovating the Strevell House during a ceremony Monday at the historic house. The house was purchased in 2008 by Tom Ewing, left, Donovan Gardner and Miller. They donated the home to the Livingston County Historical Society in 2009 and are now working on a fundraiser for money to do work on the house.

Daily Leader Project Update Article in Late 2010

This was a short article published on December 29, 2010. It included the photo below about refurbishing the old windows in the house.




Working on window restoration at the Strevell House are, from left, Ken Wooten, project manager for History Wood & Window Restoration, Dan O'Connor, shop crew, and Donovan Gardner of the Livingston County Historical Society.

Brochure and Commemorative Bricks

The Historical Society had a brochure designed and printed about the Strevell House renovation project. This brochure included the use of commemorative bricks to raise money for the renovations.

**Livingston
County
Historical
Society**



***The
Strevell-Lincoln
House
Restoration
Project***

(815) 844-5847

**BE A PART OF THE
STREVELL-LINCOLN
HOUSE RESTORATION**

The Strevell-Lincoln house is located on Livingston Street in Pontiac, Illinois. The house is the only remaining structure that we are aware of in Livingston County which welcomed Abraham Lincoln.

Granite bricks engraved with the donor's message create a walkway and setting for the house. Bricks may be donated in the name of a family, business or organization; in honor of a living person, or in memory of someone deceased. Individual bricks are available, and corporate/business bricks come in three sizes. The purchase price is tax deductible.

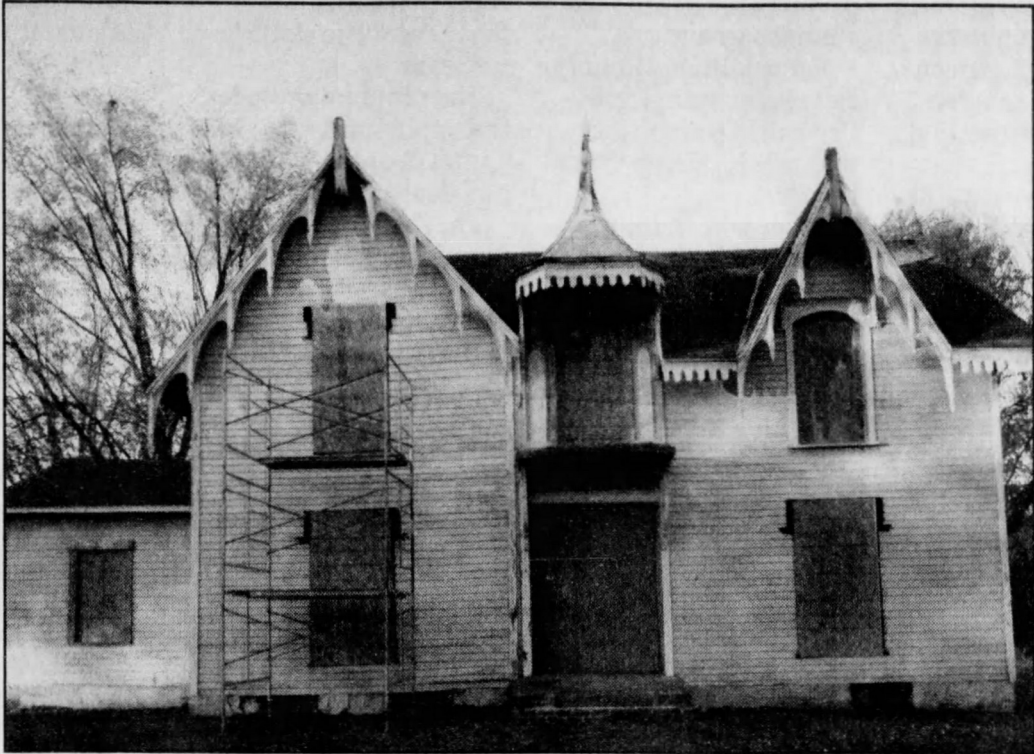
Size of Brick	Price
8" x 4"	\$100
16" x 8"	\$500
16" x 12"	\$1000
24" x 12"	\$5000

Six Pantagraph Articles in 2011 On Strevell House Project

The first article about the Strevell House project was published on January 25, 2011.

PONTIAC

RESTORATION PROJECT



The Pantagraph/KEVIN BARLOW

The Jason W. Strevell House, 401 W. Livingston St., is the last remaining home in Livingston County with known ties to Abraham Lincoln. The Livingston County Historical Society purchased the Pontiac property and is renovating it.

Pontiac house has direct ties to Lincoln

By Kevin Barlow

PONTIAC — While on a visit on the night of Jan. 27, 1860, in the home of Pontiac resident Jason W. Strevell, Abraham Lincoln predicted he would be nominated for the vice presidency of the young Republican party.

Strevell thought his guest was setting his sights too low. And he was right, as on May 16, Lincoln was elected the head of the party and its presidential candidate.

The rest is history, so they say, and preserving it is the goal of the Livingston County Historical Society as it moves forward with plans to restore the last remaining house in the county with a known tie to Lincoln.

“We are very excited about the progress we have made and the direction we have made and the direction we are headed,” said Bob Sear, president of the historical society.

Leading Attorney

Strevell was a leading attorney in Pontiac after he settled in the city in 1855. He was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives twice and served four years in the Illinois Senate.

The property, 401 W. Livingston St., was purchased by a group of residents in 2008 when it was threatened with demolition. The Livingston County Historical Society has taken stewardship of the home and has a long-range plan for its restoration and future use. The goal is to have the house repainted in historically accurate colors and the exterior completed in 2012.

“Good Start”

“We are off to a good start,” said Donovan Gardner, a member of the society. “We have a long way to go, but our goal is to work on the outside of the house, because that is what people see first.”

Members are working to identify the color of the house at the time of Lincoln’s last known visit.

“We think it may have been red because, at that time, a lot of houses were painted red,” Gardner said. “It’s pretty obvious that the inside of the house was a dark green.”

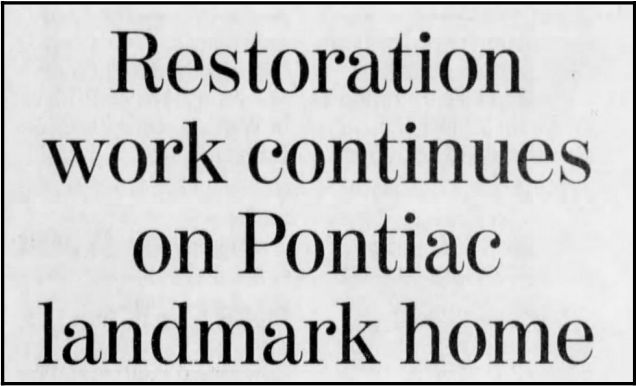
Also in progress is work on the windows, which are being removed and refurbished at History Wood and Window Restoration of Odell.

The society is accepting private donations and selling memorial bricks to help fund the project.

“We don’t have a definite total of how much money we need to raise before we are finished,” said Pontiac Tourism Director Ellie Alexander. “We raised about \$24,000, but we need to get a lot further than that. But, we are really working hard and are so excited about the future.”

Two Restoration Photos in June 2011 Pantagraph Article

The second article in 2011 was published on June 14, 2011, and included two photos of the house restoration.



Restoration
work continues
on Pontiac
landmark home





Workers remove the concrete stairs leading to the front door of the Jason W. Strevell Home in Pontiac as restoration continues. William Abraham Mason and Concrete Co. will repair and replace damaged or weak mortar in the joints of the original 1850 stone foundation. Contractor Mark Van Hovlin will work on the home's Carpenter Gothic gingerbread trim. Repaired windows and doors are expected soon from a restoration company. The Strevell house is the only remaining structure in Livingston County that welcomed Abraham Lincoln prior to his election as president. It is overseen by the Livingston County Historical Society. Jason W. Strevell was born near Albany, N.Y., and moved to Pontiac in 1855, where he was a lawyer in the 8th Judicial Circuit.

Work Stopped on Strevell House in 2011 Until More Money Raised

On September 21, 2011, the Pantagraph published a story reporting that renovation work was stopped on the project until more funds were raised.

PONTIAC

Paint the house red

Funds sought for Pontiac landmark with ties to Lincoln



For the Pantagraph/JOE DIAZ

A rendering of the exterior of the Jason W. Strevell House, Pontiac.

PONTIAC — Donations are needed to paint the exterior of the Jason W. Strevell House, where extensive renovations have been under way this year.

“A number of very generous individuals and a few organizations have already contributed, but we need the support of the entire community,” said Tom Ewing, chairman of the Livingston County Historical Society’s Strevell House Committee, in a statement.

“The historical society truly believes that this structure, the only remaining building in the county where Abraham Lincoln spent time, is worth of the financial support of the people and businesses who live and operate here.”

Windows and doors already have been refinished, the front porch replaced and the foundation repaired. Remaining exterior work involves roof and siding repair, pre-paint preparation and the painting, at an expected cost of about \$30,000.

Ewing said work cannot continue until additional funds are raised. When completed, the Strevell House will serve as both a museum and offices for the historical society.

According to the www.visitpontiac.org website, Strevell had a law practice in Pontiac for 24 years and served as a Republican in the House of Representatives and one term as a senator. He and Lincoln were close friends and spent many hours in conversations.

To donate to the project, people can access forms at Pontiac City Hall, at www.visitpontiac.org or by calling 815-844-5847.

Longer 2011 Pantagraph Story About Lack of Funds to Renovate Strevell House

Strevell House Work Slowed

By Kevin Barlow

PONTIAC — Progress on the exterior renovation of a Pontiac historical landmark has slowed as officials look for more ways to pay for the project.

Ellie Alexander, tourism director for Pontiac, says donations for the Strevell House have picked up recently but fundraising will continue.

"We have had some nice donations in the last few weeks, but we are still not where we need to be," she said.

The Livingston County Historical Society bought the house and members are volunteering their labor to restore it. But estimates for repairing wood siding, painting and fixing the roof total about \$30,000, Alexander said.

Officials had hoped to complete most of those projects by the end of the fall.

"We have some things pending but as the weather starts turning, projects such as painting could become stumbling blocks," Alexander said.

Earlier this summer, History Construction of Odell installed restored windows and doors, replacing plywood boards on the 1860 structure. Workers also have addressed foundation issues, removed a front stoop and worked on the windows and doors.

"A number of very generous individuals and a few organizations have already contributed, but we need the support of the entire community," said Tom Ewing, chairman of the Strevell House Committee. "We believe this structure is worthy of the financial support of the people and businesses who live and operate here."

When completed, the house at 401 W. Livingston will serve as both a museum and offices for the Historical Society.

Jason Strevell was an attorney based in Pontiac from 1855 to 1879 and was a close friend to Abraham Lincoln. After a trial in Bloomington on Jan. 27, 1860, Lincoln took a train to Pontiac and spoke to the Pontiac Young Men's Literary Society. He then spent the night at Strevell's house.

The Livingston County Historical Society is accepting donations. Forms can be obtained at Pontiac City Hall, online at www.visitpontiac.org or by calling 815-844-5847.

Nettleton Descendants Visit Pontiac House in 2011

The Pontiac Daily Leader published a story on October 13, 2011, describing the visit some Zelus Nettleton descendants made to the Pontiac Strevell House.

Lineage leads to Strevell House

By Lois Westermeyer

When Joyce Eckstrom of Red Wing, Minn., gazed upon the Strevell house Monday, she became the first known direct descendant of the property to visit the historic Pontiac landmark.

Collins Miller and his wife, Candy, two of the forces behind saving the house, were with Joyce Eckstrom and her husband, Delano, Monday, talking about how their paths had finally intersected.

"This was not originally the Strevell house," Collins Miller said. "The left side of the house was the original building and it was actually built in the early 1850s by Mr. Zelus Nettleton. He and his wife, Elizabeth Kelly Nettleton, had two children, John and Mary, and Mrs. Nettleton was pregnant with their third child when her husband died in 1857.

“Mr. Jason W. Strevell came forward and married her. When her son was born, he was named Charles Nettleton. Ten years later, he was adopted by Jason Strevell through a special act of the legislature and took the name Charles Nettleton Strevell. Jason and Elizabeth Strevell had a daughter together as well, Helen Strevell,” Miller said.

When Jason Strevell married the widow Nettleton, he assumed ownership of the house at 401 W. Livingston St. and added on, giving the house its present look. The house is now owned by the Livingston County Historical Society, which has launched a fundraising campaign to restore the structure as it is the only remaining building in the county where it is documented that Abraham Lincoln spent time.

Miller said he had been doing research on the family and house and lost the trace of the Nettleton family.

“We followed the Strevell history, but really lost track of the Nettleton family after 1872.

Mrs. Eckstrom said Charles Nettleton Strevell was the brother of her great-grandfather, John Nettleton, but she didn’t know how the Strevell name came about.

“I just finally found the connection about a month or two ago. Since then I have been reading up on the property and finally we wanted to come and see it ourselves.

“It is just amazing the amount of work that has gone into the home,” Mrs. Eckstrom said.

“It’s not work, not when you love something,” Collins Miller responded.

Miller also noted that when Mrs. Elizabeth Kelly Nettleton remarried in 1858, she and Jason Strevell traveled back to her home in Minnesota for the ceremony. It took place about 15 miles from where the Eckstroms currently reside.

Zelus and Elizabeth Kelly Nettleton were Joyce Eckstrom’s great-great-grandparents.

Collins Miller also had an interesting story about Mrs. Eckstrom’s great-grandfather, John Nettleton, who married Olive Potter in Pontiac in 1870.

“John was age 7 when his father died and was age 10 when Abraham Lincoln visited the home. In addition to that house, Zelus Nettleton had owned a lot of farmland and Jason Strevell also assumed ownership of that land.

“However, in 1872 he filed suit in Livingston County as the oldest son and rightful owner of the farmland,” Miller said, referring to copies of docket pages stemming from the suit which he obtained from the courthouse. “He was granted ownership of the land, plus was given a monetary settlement for a share of the crops raised and sold over those years.

“Right after that is where we lost the trail of John,” he added.

“Mrs. Eckstrom was able to tell us John packed up his family and moved to the Joliet-Plainfield area. Now we are researching the family lines from there.”

However, before they left Pontiac, John and his wife, Olive, welcomed a son, Wilson Nettleton, who was born in 1871. Wilson Nettleton and his wife, Millie Steffenhagen Nettleton, are Joyce Eckstrom's grandparents.

"Now that we have the Nettleton connection, it is even more exciting because the Nettleton family also had significant impact on Pontiac. We are looking forward to following these new avenues of information and being able to find out more about this family. Additionally, Del and Joyce are excited about uncovering more about her family tree," Miller added.

While in Pontiac, the Eckstroms purchased a brick for the walk, which is one way the Historical Society is raising funds for the home's restoration.

The Eckstroms' son, Jerry, is a cabinet maker and he has promised to build a piece for the interior renovation, which will begin when the exterior is complete.



Joyce and Delana Eckstrom of Red Wing Minn., stand in front of the Strevell house, which is undergoing renovation. Joyce Eckstrom is the first direct descendant of the property to visit the historic Pontiac Home. Pontiac Daily Leader.

Strevell House Project Gets \$5,000 Gift in Late 2011

The November 16, 2011 Pantagraph published a story about this project receiving a \$5,000 gift.

Strevell House Receives Gift

PONTIAC — The Livingston County Historical Society has received \$5,000 from the Floyd A. and Alta I. Bryne Trust for restoration of the Jason W. Strevell House. The Strevell House is the only remaining structure in Livingston County known to have welcomed Abraham Lincoln. The Trust also contributed to the purchase of the Strevell house in 2009. The society has continued to restore the home to its 1860 condition. Funding is from private donations and a memorial brick program.

Pantagraph Published Two Articles About Strevell House Project in 2012

The first article was published on July 24, 2012, and includes a description of the Strevell House project.

Pontiac 175th Anniversary

Historical Society Preserving History

By Bob Sear

The Livingston County Historical Society was established in 1928 and is charged with preserving the history and artifacts of Livingston County. Presently, the society over-sees three historic properties.

The Jones House, circa 1858, is owned by the society and located on East Madison Street. It is the oldest remaining brick home in Pontiac and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house has many historical objects donated or on loan from area residents. The Jones House will be open from 1 to 3 p.m. July 28.

The Yost House, built in 1898, was owned and occupied by the Yost family and is located at 298 W. Water, along the river. The home and its contents were donated to the city by the last surviving member of the family, J. Paul Yost. The furnishings and objects make the house a unique place to visit. It also will be open July 28.

The Strevell/Lincoln house, 401 W. Livingston St., was built in 1854 and added onto a few years later by Jason Strevell. The house is in the Carpenter Gothic style. In January 1860, Abraham Lincoln traveled to give a speech at the Pontiac Presbyterian Church, and afterward went to the home of Strevell, his friend, political confidant and a local attorney. When the conversation turned to subjects of less importance, Strevell told Lincoln that he doubted that Lincoln was really 4 inches taller than himself. According to a 1901 letter written by

Strevell to his son Charles, Lincoln volunteered, "You can take my height if you wish."

Lincoln stood in a doorway and Strevell marked his height by making a scratch in the wooden door frame. Then, using a 2-foot ruler, he measured the distance and confirmed Lincoln's true height of 6 feet, 4 inches.

Over the years, the house was remodeled and broken into apartments. In 2008, when the owner contemplated razing the house, several Pontiac families purchased the property in order to preserve it. In 2009, it was transferred to the Livingston County Historical Society. The house has been evaluated by several restoration professionals and a plan has been formulated to return the house to its pre Civil War condition, with exterior work under way. The long-term restoration project will rely on private funding. You can support the restoration by purchasing a memorial granite brick in the walkway that leads to the front entrance.

Contact the Historical Society for more information.

In recognition of the 175th anniversary of Livingston County, the historical society, with the help of Acclaim Press, will publish "A Pictorial History of Livingston County." The hardbound book will be 8-1/2 by 11 inches with a full-color cover and dust jacket, and run 200 to 300 pages. The cover will be the historic courthouse, and we are looking for relevant images. The book will be available before Christmas. We have orders for more than 400 books and many very interesting photographs.

The deadline for submitting photographs and ordering a book will be Aug. 15. Of special interest are photographs from the last 50 to 60 years. Photos from newspapers cannot be used. Pages in the book can be purchased in honor or in memory of a person or family, church, school or civic group. Contact the society for more information.

Sear is president of the Livingston County Historical Society.



The Second 2012 Pantagraph Story on the Strevell House

On September 13, 2012, the Pantagraph published an update on the Strevell House renovation project and noted the project was half-way completed.

Houseful of History

Progress made to restore Pontiac landmark where Lincoln discussed key issues in 1860

By Kevin Barlow

A Pontiac historical landmark threatened with demolition just four years ago is now at the halfway point of a full-scale renovation.

"There may be a lot of work still to go, but the progress they have made this year has been substantial," said Pontiac City Administrator Bob Karls. "It's looking better every day."

The Livingston County Historical Society bought the Strevell House on West Livingston Street, the last known structure in Livingston County to have hosted Abraham Lincoln before he was elected president. After a speech at the First Presbyterian Church in 1860, Lincoln went to the home of Pontiac attorney Jason Strevell, and the two men discussed the upcoming presidential campaign, the state of the Union and other important social and political issues of the day.

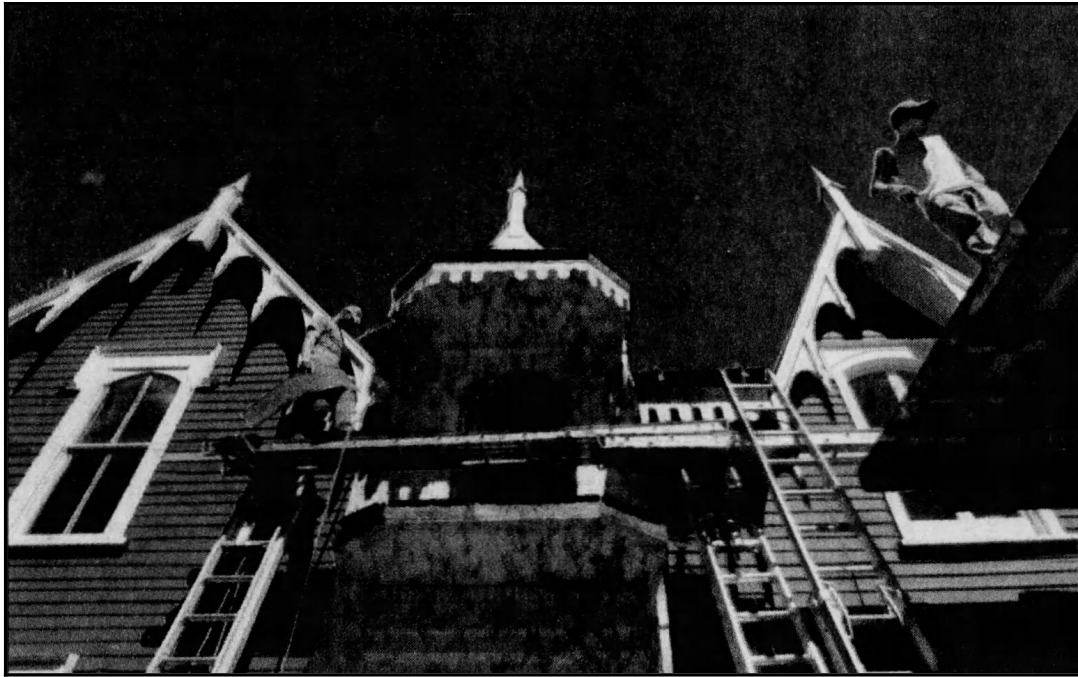
"Our goal is to restore it to the way it was when Lincoln was last here," said Mike Ingles, a member of the Strevell House Steering Committee. "But it's a slow process and it takes a lot of volunteer help."

The committee has worked to gather resources through cash gifts, donations of goods and services and the sale of commemorative paving bricks. Much of that money has been used to restore the exterior of the home, which is nearing completion. To assist with the restoration of the roof, Bob Landrus Roofing and Construction of Pontiac donated materials, and Landrus even donated his own time.

"Bob is very community-minded, and his generosity saved us a lot of money," Ingles said.



Chase Berryhill stands on a scaffold while handing shingles to his father.



Chase Berryhill, left, and John Rodion, right, work recently on replacing the roof of the historic Strevell House in Pontiac. With them is Berryhill's father, J. Berryhill, who is partially hidden on the edge of a dormer behind his son.

New Roof for Strevell House

The September 15, 2012, edition of the Daily Leader published a story about the house getting a new roof.

Landrus donates roofing supplies

By Cynthia Grau

The exterior work of Pontiac's Jason Strevell House, located at 401 W. Livingston St., is nearing completion, thanks to the work of Bob Landrus Roofing and Construction of Pontiac.

The Strevell House, made famous by a trip President Abraham Lincoln made to Pontiac in 1860, is the last known structure still standing in Livingston County to have hosted Lincoln.

Bob Landrus explained that his involvement with the Strevell house was a way to give back to the community that he says has been good to him and his business.

"I've been working in the area for 30 years and it's a strong community where people join together. I think it's the garden spot of the world. I really like Pontiac and I felt like I wanted and needed to give something back and I think this is a well-worth-while project to be working on," Landrus said.

When all is said and done with Landrus' crew's work on the roof and other structural work, he said it would tally up to about 250 total man-hours. "We're moving along well. The weather's been good to us so far this summer, besides the large amount of rain we had during the weekend. Hopefully we'll continue moving and get in and get out so the next group can start working," he said.

Dee Ingles, member of the Strevell House Restoration Committee, praised all the work that Landrus and his crew have been doing.

"We're very fortunate that Bob came along to help with this community project. He's very community-minded and gives back. He was a big supporter of the Lincoln statue. He came forward and said he would donate the materials and his labor and the committee had to pay for was the labor of his employees," Ingles said.

Ingles is proud of all the work that has been done on the entire home since restoration began in 2008. "Clearly, 50 percent of the work is done because we're working on the outside of the house to preserve the house and we want to get all of that done before winter. The glass in the windows has been replaced and Bob did some structural work underneath the shingles. He ran into some problems. It will be in great shape going into winter months," she said.

Ingles stood to the south of the house, taking in all the new changes to the roof and the finished painting on the house and said she just felt "amazed."

The committee is still raising funds for the restoration project and one way the public can help is to purchase a memorial brick, she added. "During the winter, we want to sell more memorial bricks so we can continue on in the spring, laying bricks up the side-walks," although she stated she would like to see the project begin yet this fall. "This will promote excitement and interest in the project."

The bricks would make a great Christmas gift or gifts for anniversaries or memorials for parents or loved ones, Ingles enthused. "This is a community that stays together and holds together and really gets involved in community projects like this, especially historic projects. Pontiac is a very historic community."

She is already brain-storming about how to show off the home to the public. "We've had a lot of interest and we need more for bricks. In the spring, I would like to hold something in the yard. Maybe we can do some landscaping and hold a special gathering for people in the community who are interested," she said.



Bob Landrus, owner of Bob Landrus Roofing and Construction, volunteered his time and donated supplies to complete work on the roof of the Strevell House in Pontiac this summer.

Old House Expert Makes 2nd Inspection of Strevell House

On September 18, 2012, Tom Vance made a second visit to the Strevell house. A copy of his report is shown below.

Second Report on The Jason Strevell House Located in Pontiac, Illinois

September 18, 2012

By Tom Vance

Introduction

In 2009 I made a visit to Pontiac, Illinois to evaluate and make recommendations on the Jason Strevell House. Since that time, considerable work has been done on the exterior restoration of the house. Work has also been done on the interior to remove later materials such as drop ceilings, carpet, wall paper, closets and a bathroom to no-cover more of the original interior fabric of the house.

On September 18th, I made a return visit to look at the interior and help determine how to proceed with the structural research and restoration. There was a limited amount of time allowing for only a cursory examination.

Determinations made during the visit are as follows:

East Parlor & Adjoining Room

The paneling had been removed in the east parlor revealing several layers of wall paper and underneath that, the original dark green paint. The arched doorway and wall dividing the room appears to be original to the construction but a closer examination needs to be made. The configuration of the chimney in these rooms is still unknown. There should be some evidence of the chimney on the wall when wall paper is removed.

The bathroom has been removed from the smaller north room, revealing layers of wallpaper and again the dark green paint. The doorway into the hall was opened up.

Recommendation — carefully remove wallpaper exposing the dark green paint. SAVE large samples of the wall paper and plaster. Remove the textured plaster from the ceiling along with wall paper. It is possible that the ceiling was also painted dark green. See if any large areas of the dark green paint can be preserved.

Hallway

A section of later paneling was removed in the hall way exposing a nice early wallpaper. This wallpaper is also found underneath later layers of wall paper on the adjacent walls in the hall. Underneath the wall paper is an early green paint with another shade of green paint underneath that. It looks like the hallway, including ceiling, was originally painted light green.

Recommendation - Later wall paper should be carefully removed on the walls to expose the earliest layer where possible. In other areas, the green paint should be exposed if possible. See how much of what can be uncovered and what kind of shape it is in. Then we can make a determination about how to do the restoration. SAVE large samples of all wall paper and any loose plaster that comes off.

Upstairs east Bedrooms

The front bedroom on the second floor of the east addition was examined and seems to not have had a finish coat of plaster applied. This is possibly because it was meant to be wallpapered. Several layers of wal paper are present. The ceiling appears to have had a finish coat of plaster and has had a recent coat of textured plaster applied. The smaller rear bedroom has several layers of wallpaper and underneath that is an early orange paint.

Recommendation — Carefully remove the wall paper, trying to get to and identify the first layer. Same with the ceilings. In the rear bedroom, expose as much of the orange paint as possible.

Woodwork Paint

I examined the paint on the woodwork in two places with a magnifying glass. One was a piece of trim from the recently opened doorway in the hall. The other was on the woodwork around the door in the far west original room that leads to the outside. There were multiple layers of paint on both samples, but in both there was evidence of wood graining as the first or second layer. Wood graining was widely done on woodwork in houses of the 1850s & 60s period. There is a layer of white paint underneath the wood graining in the west room, indicating that the wood graining of the original house may have been done when the addition was added. I didn't have time to go back and check for a layer of white paint underneath beneath the wood graining in the hallway. The upstairs may or may not have been wood grained as sometimes only the main floor is done.

Recommendation — The woodwork needs to be checked for wood graining in all rooms of the house. Also, try carefully stripping some of the woodwork in a non-prominent place and see if you can take it down a layer at a time to expose the wood graining.

Original House and North Addition Configuration

The configuration of the original house has yet to be determined. Removing the later bathroom in that area will help determine such things as the location of the original stairs to the second floor. An interesting door was uncovered in the west room of the original house. This door opened east toward the main room and is now blocked with plywood. It was added later, probably when the new addition was built. It may have led to a pantry, but needs to be further investigated.

The attic of the north addition needs to be checked for previous chimney openings and construction techniques. The attic above the west room of the original house was checked and a stove chimney opening was found at the peak on the west end of the roof. Further checking was also done in the basement and crawl space of the original house and in the crawl space of the north addition. There were no signs of a fireplace foundation in either crawl space. There is an opening in the foundation on the north wall of the original house which should be further investigated. There are some short floor joists just above the opening that run perpendicular to the main joists, possibly indicating an architectural feature. Hopefully more will be determined when the modern bathroom is removed and more of the original house is exposed.

Recommendations

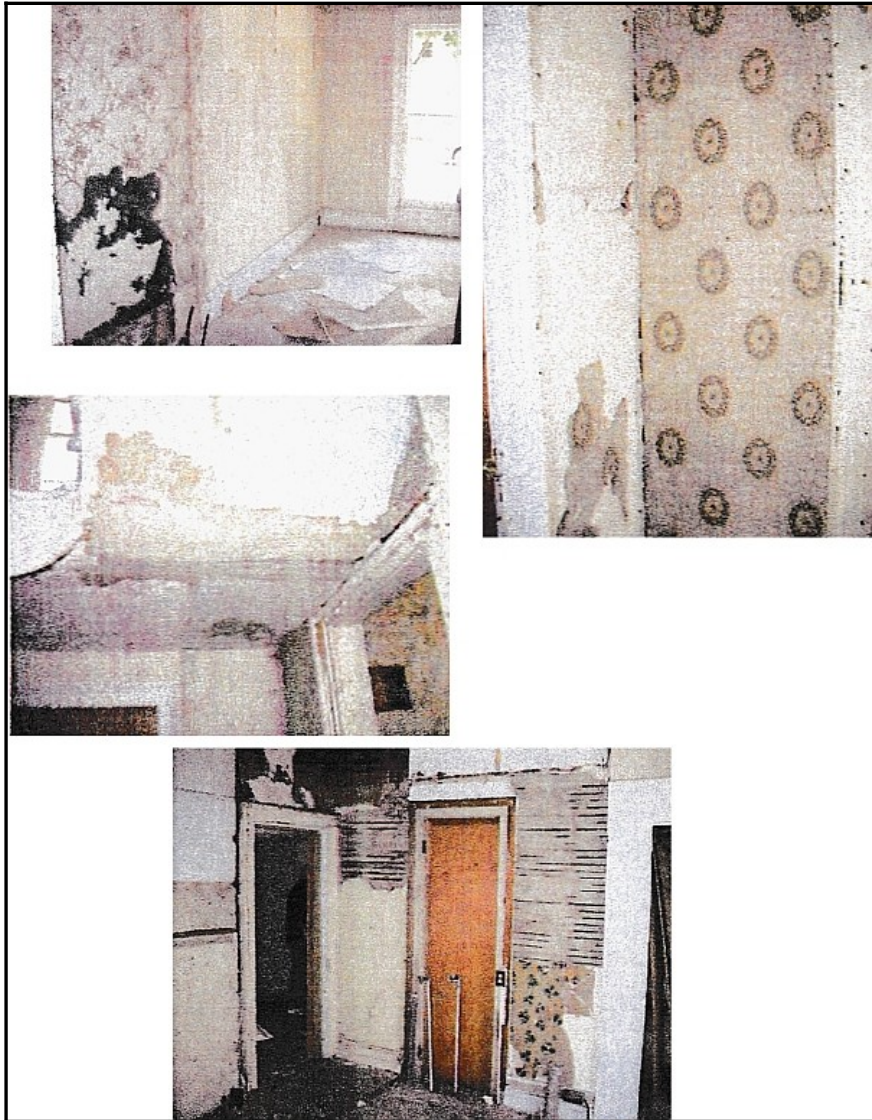
1. Continue to carefully remove later materials such as wallpaper and the modern bathroom.
2. Save large samples of all wallpaper, plaster and other early materials.
3. Try carefully stripping some of the painted woodwork.
4. Have records been checked such as the Abstract for the date of purchase by Zelus Nettleton and the tax records to help determine the date of the addition? Also are there any Strevell family or business records or newspaper ads from the period that might give clues to the house?

Most of the items on the Further Analysis check list still apply. There was limited time during the September 18th visit and further investigation is needed.

Front Porch

As we discussed, the front porch should have the corners cut and angled to match the porch roves above. This will give a symmetrical feel to the porch area on the front of the house. One or two wooden stairs can then be added on the porch between the angle cuts.

Images from Second Vance Visit to the Strevell House in 2012



Undated Tom Vance Report with Front Step Design Suggestions

Mr. Vance also prepared a report where he reviewed the typical design of other period homes and then suggested how the steps could be rebuilt at the Strevell House. This report can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/hzucm3sd.

One Pantagraph Article in 2013 on Strevell House

The June 24, 2013, Pantagraph published an article about the use of commemorative bricks to raise money for the house renovation project.

Restoration continues on home visited by Lincoln

New project uses bricks that donors can purchase

PONTIAC — Window repair and replacement on the first floor of the historic Jason W. Strevell House has brought outside restoration nearly to a close.

Next up: installation of engraved memorial bricks that will be used for the front sidewalk.

The home, the only remaining structure in Livingston County to have hosted a visit from Abraham Lincoln, is a project of the Livingston County Historical Society.

The historical society hopes to restore part of the home — the section related to Lincoln's visit — to its 1850s configuration. The engraved memorial bricks, part of a fundraising program, should be laid at the end of June.

History Wood & Window Restoration of Odell worked on the first-floor windows, located at the rear of the structure, said Pontiac tourism director Ellie Alexander.

Strevell was a lawyer and political colleague of Lincoln, Alexander said, and Lincoln came to Pontiac in January 1860 to speak to the Pontiac Young Men's Literary society at the Methodist Church.

Lincoln spent the evening talking to Strevell before catching an early train back to Bloomington, where he was representing a client.

Donations from \$100 to \$5,000

The bricks remain available for purchase, with sizes based on donations that range from \$100 to \$5,000. Donations also are welcome. Call 815-844-5847.

Daily Leader Article in 2013

The Daily Leader ran an article on December 7, 2013 about the status of the restoration project.

LIVINGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Bob Sear gives update on society's Strevell House project

With thousands of volunteer man-hours and generous donations, the Livingston County Historical Society is slowly working toward its goal of preserving the Jason W. Strevell house in Pontiac.

The Strevell home is the last existing structure in the county known to have hosted the nation's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. According to Livingston Historical Society President Bob Sear, saving this home is one of the most important current projects of the historical society.

Jason Strevell came to Pontiac as a young man from his birthplace in up-state New York.

He passed the Illinois Bar exam to become a lawyer and developed into one of the leading citizens of the city. He served two terms in the Illinois House of Representatives and one term as a senator.

During his political activities, he befriended Lincoln as they shared many political views. In January of 1860, Lincoln came to Pontiac to speak to the Pontiac Young Men's Literary group at the Presbyterian Church.

After the speech, Lincoln went to Strevell's home on Livingston Street to wait for the early morning train to take him to Bloomington.

During the evening's conversation, according to Strevell's own account, they spoke of many of the troubles facing the nation. In a letter to his son, Charles, Strevell relates that while Lincoln believed that he might be nominated as a vice-presidential candidate, Strevell argued that Lincoln would get the top spot on the Republican ticket for the 1860 election.

The house has undergone a complete exterior restoration. The outside work has included a new roof, replacement of some shingles, restoration of doors and windows, and replacement of ornamental fret work.

The foundation has been repaired and the exterior has been painted in a historically accurate paint scheme. Currently, work is underway on the interior of the structure where much needs to be done.

In a recent interview, Sear acknowledged that countless hours of volunteer labor has contributed to the work thus far accomplished.

"Many businesses involved in doing the work on the house have provided free labor," Sear stated. "We have to pay for materials, and that is expensive, but with the donation of time and effort, we have been able to do so much with not a lot of money."

Sear estimates that the amount of money spent on the project to date is around \$60,000. The interior restoration and repair will be even more expensive as there is much that needs to be done.

The Strevell house had been chopped into apartments prior to its acquisition by the Historical Society. It was threatened with demolition before being saved by a group of concerned citizens in 2008.

"Monetary contributions from individuals, businesses and charitable trusts have resulted in just enough funds to carry the project this far," Sear said. "To continue with our progress, we need to raise more money."

The main fundraising tool for the Strevell House work has been the sale of memorial granite bricks which have been placed to create the main walkway to the front door of the building.

Bricks come in a variety of sizes and can be engraved with a name, a message, or memorial. Ellie Alexander, director of Pontiac Tourism, is overseeing the Memorial Brick project and noted, "The bricks are still available and could make a wonderful Christmas gift for someone you love."

For information on purchasing a brick, contact Alexander at 815-844-5847.



Livingston County Historical Society President Bob Sear has called saving the Strevell House one of the most important current projects of the society. To date around \$60,000 has been spent on the restoration.

Two Pantagraph Articles About Strevell House in 2014

The first article was published on January 4, 2014.

Pontiac

Work slows on Historic Home

By Kevin Barlow

PONTIAC — The recent cold weather isn't doing much to help volunteers restoring the Strevell House, but the president of the Livingston County Historical Society said work on the home that once hosted Abraham Lincoln will resume full scale in the spring.

"A lot of our volunteers head to warmer climates for the winter," Bob Sear said. "It gives us a chance to focus on some other aspects such as fundraising."

The outside restoration is complete, Sear said. It includes a new roof, restoration of doors and windows and the replacement of ornamental fretwork. The foundation has been repaired, and the exterior has been painted in a historically accurate scheme.

"It looks really good when you drive past it," Sear said. "We still have some yard work and things like that to do, but it looks much better than it did."

Now, the focus has switched to the interior of the home at 401 W. Livingston St., which had been an apartment building in recent years.

"There is still a lot of work to do there," said Ellie Alexander, director of Pontiac Tourism. "A lot of progress has been made, but it's going to take a lot of work and a lot of time."

The Historical Society acquired the property in 2009, and about \$60,000 has been spent so far on the project, Sear said. Most of that money has been spent on the exterior, but the interior restoration and repair will be even more expensive, he said.

Sear said several businesses and volunteers have contributed labor and, sometimes, supplies.

"The inside is pretty much gutted out," he said. "We have some electrical and plumbing work to do, but things have slowed down a lot and will remain that way until the weather gets warmer."

The 1850s home of Jason Strevell is the last existing structure in Livingston County known to have hosted Lincoln.

Strevell, an upstate New York native, was an attorney based in Pontiac from 1855 to 1879 and was a close friend to Lincoln. After a trial in Bloomington on

Jan. 27, 1860, Lincoln took a train to Pontiac and spoke to the Pontiac Young Men's Literary Society. He then spent the night at Strevell's house before returning by train to Bloomington.

Funds have been raised for the restoration project through the sale of memorial granite bricks that have been placed to create the main walkway to the front door of the building. Bricks come in a variety of sizes and can be engraved with a name and/or a message such as a memorial. For information on purchasing a brick, contact Alexander at 815-844-5847.

The second Pantagraph article was published on August 25, 2014.



PONTIAC CVB/For the Pantagraph

Workers lay sod at historic Strevell House in Pontiac. The 1855-era home is the only remaining structure in Livingston County known to have hosted Abraham Lincoln.

Strevell House in Pontiac gets lawn

PONTIAC The grass is greener outside Strevell House, thanks to a recent sod-laying project at the historic house.

The weedy, patchy, and neglected lawn at the 1855 era home was replaced under the direction of Collins Miller, a member of the Livingston County Historical Society's Strevell House Committee.

Strevell House, 401 W. Livingston St., is the only remaining structure in Livingston County known to have hosted Abraham Lincoln.

Jason Strevell was a colleague and friend of Lincoln's and took an active role in state and local politics. On Jan. 27, 1860, Lincoln came to Pontiac to address the Young Men's Literary Society at the Presbyterian Church.

After his speech, Lincoln went to Strevell's home for a brief reception and to await the early morning southbound train so that he could return to Bloomington, where he was involved in a legal case.

The carpenter Gothic style house was purchased in 2009 after it was threatened with demolition and it eventually was donated to the historical society.

Bob McCoy Illustration in April of 2014

In April of 2014, Bob McCoy, a Pontiac artist, created a unique illustration titled ***One Day in January 1860.*** In this illustration, Abraham Lincoln is leaving the Strevell House on his way to the train station, and he tips his hat to Jason Strevell standing in the doorway of his home at 401 West Livingston Street.

Bob offered the use of his drawing for the Historical Society to raise money for the house refurbishment. With his permission, Bob's unique illustration is shown below.



Pantagraph Published One Article About Strevell House in 2015

This article was published on March 14, 2015.

Enbridge donates to Strevell House Project

PONTIAC The Livingston County Historical Society has received a \$1,500 grant from Enbridge Inc. to aid in the restoration of the historic Strevell House. The Strevell House is the only remaining building in Livingston County known to have hosted Abraham Lincoln.

Two Articles Published in 2016 About the Strevell House Project

The first Pantagraph article was published on July 25, 2016.

Work progresses on Strevell House

PANTAGRAPH STAFF PONTIAC — Interior restoration work is progressing on Strevell House, the last standing Livingston County structure with direct ties to Abraham Lincoln.

The house, on Livingston Street in Pontiac, is owned by the Livingston County Historical Society. Current work on the interior is under the direction of Collins Miller and former U.S. Congressman Tom Ewing, said Ellie Alexander, the city's tour-ism director.

The society already has spent just over \$78,000 on exterior work that included foundation repair and a new roof. The money has come solely from donations and the sale of memorial bricks.

According to the historical society's plan, Alexander said, the entry hall and front parlor will be restored to represent how the rooms might have looked in the late 1850s when Lincoln visited for the last time. An adjoining room will be used for local history displays and small community-oriented history events.

The 1854 house was built in the Carpenter Gothic style and is named for Jason W. Strevell, a New York native who moved to Illinois in 1855, Alexander said. He opened his law practice in Pontiac the following year and was a member of the city's board of trustees when Pontiac was incorporated in 1856.

Alexander said Strevell later served two terms in the lower house of the Illinois legislature, and one term in the upper house.

The Lincoln tie to the house came in January 1860, when Lincoln spoke before the Pontiac Young Men's Literary Society at the Presbyterian Church in Pontiac.

After his speech, local accounts say, Lincoln retired to Strevell's home for a small reception and to wait for the early morning, south-bound Chicago & Alton train.

The Strevells moved to Miles City, Mont., in 1879. Their Pontiac house fell into disrepair and was threatened with demolition in 2008 before it was purchased by private citizens and then acquired by the historical society.



Tom Ewing scrapes old wallpaper from an interior wall at the Jason Strevell House, Pontiac.

The second article published in 2016 about the Strevell House was in the December 4, 2016, edition of the Pantagraph.

ENBRIDGE INC. and the union division of MATRIX SERVICE CO. have donated \$11,000 to the restoration of the Jason W. Strevell historic home in Pontiac. The Strevell House is the only remaining structure in Livingston County known to have been visited by Abraham Lincoln. The restoration project is being managed by the Livingston County Historical Society.

Sign Made After Large Enbridge and Matrix Service Co. Donations

The Historical Society made a 48 by 96 inch sign and placed it in the front yard of the Strevell House.



Donovan Gardner Passes Away in 2017

Donovan was one of three gentlemen who saved the Strevell House from the wrecking ball and helped purchase the home in 2008. Donovan passed away before the house was restored and his obituary is below.

Donovan Francis Gardner, 84, of Bloomington passed away peacefully Saturday, June 24, 2017 at Heritage Health in Bloomington.

A Celebration of Life service and reception will be held on Sunday, July 2, 2017, at the First United Methodist Church in Pontiac at 3 p.m. with Pastor Tom Goodell officiating. Calvert & Martin Funeral Home in Pontiac is handling the arrangements.

Donovan was born on October 1, 1932 at home to Francis Raymond and Hazel Blair Gardner of Toledo, Illinois. He graduated from Cumberland County High School in 1950. On July 5, 1952 Donovan married Barbara Anne Dey at Greenville, Illinois. Donovan and Barb had three children, Brian (Trish) of Moscow, ID, Timothy, and Todd (Sarah) of Melbourne, Australia. Barbara passed away in 1990. Donovan married Carol Rickgauer Shaffer on December 30, 1996. Donovan accepted with open arms Carol's three children Julie (Nicolas) Houzeau, Mons, Belgium; Kelley (Kent) Erhardt, St. Charles, MO; and Dyke (Kendra) Shaffer, Farmer City, IL. Together there are seven grandchildren who were the light of Don's life. Donovan was preceded in death by his parents, wife Barbara, and son Timothy.

In 1952 he joined the US Air Force serving at stations in the US and in French Morocco. He left active duty in 1956 with the rank of Buck Sergeant.

Donovan and Barbara came to Pontiac in 1960 when Donovan became President & CEO of the Chamber of Commerce. In 1962 he was named Administrator of Evenglow Lodge. A position he held for over 20 years. He furthered his career as a United Methodist Senior Living Consultant traveling and working to improve care facilities across the US as well as in Kazakhstan and Cuba. This work earned him respect in the nursing home industry. As he moved into retirement Donovan returned to Evenglow as a member of the Board. One of the accomplishments during Donovan's tenure was the creation of the Memory Care Building, Evenglow Inn. For two years he again served as the Interim President & CEO of Evenglow.

He was active in the United Methodist Church serving on the Conference Council on Ministries and the District Committee on Nominations. He served on the Illinois Great Rivers Conference Board of Trustees, the Personnel Committee and as a lay delegate.

Don and his sons became involved in the Boy Scouts. Don took on a leadership role becoming Scoutmaster of Pontiac Troop 175 for several years and being actively involved in the W.D. Boyce Council. His devotion to scouting lasted the rest of his life. During these years he discovered a passion for outdoor sports including camping, backpacking, bicycling and canoeing. A passion he shared with friends and family. He enjoyed tennis and basketball.

He was appointed to the Illinois State Health Facilities Planning Board by the governor. He participated in local government as a member of the Livingston County Board, Livingston County Historical Society and most recently the Pontiac City Council. He played a key role in developing Pontiac's Route 66 attractions and was instrumental in securing the historic Strevell House. He created the '32ers Club' for local men born in 1932.

Donovan's many years of giving to others through his profession and his spirit of volunteerism in his church and community will remain as an example to all.

Memorials may be made in Don's name to the Evenglow Lodge, 215 E. Washington St. Pontiac, IL 61764, the Pontiac First United Methodist Church, 219 N. Chicago St., Pontiac, IL 61764, or to the charity of your choice.

One Article in 2017 Pantagraph About Strevell House Project

This article was published on November 5, 2017.

Memorial Bricks Available

PONTIAC The Strevell/Lincoln House Restoration Committee of the Livingston County Historical Society has a limited number of \$500 memorial bricks available for purchase. The bricks will be engraved with a dedication to a person, business or other sentiment, then added to the memorial walkway that leads to the front door of the Jason Strevell home. Call 815 844 5847.

Twenty Photos of House Renovation Taken on November 14, 2017

The Pontiac Tourism Department took 20 photos of the renovation of the house. These photos can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/438kjr3d.

Strevell House Grand Opening in 2018

The 10 year long project to renovate the Strevell House was completed in 2018. The Pantagraph published two stories in 2018 about this project. The first article was published on June 4, 2018 in the Pantagraph.

Historic Strevell House to open this summer

Home of Lincoln colleague undergoes renovations in Pontiac

By Kevin Barlow

PONTIAC — When former U.S. Rep. Tom Ewing first approached the Livingston County Historical Society to discuss the Pontiac home that once belonged to Jason Strevell, he realized he had work to do.

"I was met with a lot of blank stares," he said. "They didn't know who he was."

Strevell, Ewing explained, was a colleague of Abraham Lincoln. In 1856, he opened a law practice in Pontiac, which brought him into contact with the future president. Strevell was elected to the city's board of trustees when Pontiac was incorporated as a village that same year. He served a couple of terms in the Illinois House of Representative and one term as a senator.

"But he was kind of lost to history here," said Ewing. Strevell and Lincoln became close friends and Lincoln spent the night at his home at least once. Strevell moved from Pontiac to Montana in 1879 and died in 1903.

By 2008, the home at 401 W. Livingston Street, had been divided up into apartments, and was threatened with demolition. Several Pontiac families, aware of the historic significance of the building, purchased the home to save

it. They then transferred ownership to the Livingston County Historical Society. Through corporate donations and private funding, work began to restore the home.

"It never seemed to move forward very quickly," Ewing said. "It seemed like we reached a plateau and just couldn't make much progress. But the community was very supportive and had a great interest in this project and we are grateful."

The restored house is expected to be unveiled and open to the public this summer, said Livingston County Historical Society President Bob Sear.

"It's been a lot of work over a long period of time, but it's very gratifying to know that we are close to the point where we can open this to the public and show off what we have accomplished," he said.

Official estimates on the amount of money it took for the renovation is not officially known, but officials say hundreds of thousands of dollars went into the project.

The home's foundation has been repaired, the roof has been replaced and the exterior has been completely restored. The entry hall and front parlor were restored to represent how the rooms might have looked in the 1860s.

"We have several historical homes in Pontiac that are open to the public and we didn't think we needed another," Ewing said. "So, we tried to save the historical perspective of the house and made it into somewhat of a museum, but the other half of the house will be open to the public for small meetings, community events, receptions, showers or small get togethers. It's a great way to use the house and make it part of the community."

Artwork, painted by members of the Community Art Center and by local artist Harold Cunningham, also will be on display at the home. There also are several pieces of art and historical documents about Lincoln, too.

A date for the unveiling and grand opening has not been set, but Ewing and Sear hope that it will happen before Labor Day. Work will continue until then.

"I don't think we will ever be done working on it, to be honest," Ewing said. "There are always going to be things we want to improve, fix or add. But when we open this, it will be a great thing for Pontiac."



The Strevell House in Pontiac has been repainted and restored, including a new roof and new front entrance.



Workers at the Strevell House on Livingston Street in Pontiac removed wallpaper and paint during the restoration project.



The Strevell House, located at 401 West Livingston St. in Pontiac, has been restored and will be unveiled and open to the public this summer.

Additional Demolition Phase Photos of Strevell House



Left-to-Right, Bob Sear, Historical Society President, Collins Miller, one of three men who purchased the house in 2008 for the Historical Society, and Mike Ingles, Volunteer Worker





Collins Miller doing demolition work.

The second Pantagraph article in 2018 announced the Grand Opening of the Strevell House on June 23, 2018.

Livingston County Historical Society

Open House for Strevell home

PONTIAC — The Livingston County Historical Society invites the public to attend a grand opening celebration to mark the completion of the restoration project for the Jason W. Strevell House in Pontiac on June 23.

Members of the Historical Society, local media, government officials, and the public will get their first chance to see the transformation that has taken place both inside and outside the structure — the site of Abraham Lincoln's last visit to Pontiac before he became President. The Strevell house is located at 401 W. Livingston St. in Pontiac and the Open House will run from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Continuing with the history theme, also on June 23, there will be a free history presentation staged at the nearby Eagle Performing Arts Theater.

As part of the city's commemoration of the 200th birthday of Illinois statehood, the Eagle's show focuses on three remarkable women from Illinois.

"Three Illinois Women During the Civil War" stars Betty Carlson Kay, and will begin at 2 p.m. with the doors opening at 1:30 p.m. The Eagle Theater is located at 319 N. Plum St. and the phone number is 815-844-1187.

For more information on the show visit the Theater's web page, Pontiaceagle.com. The Strevell house was built in the 1850s and is a classic example of the Gothic style of architecture popular at that time. It was home to the Jason W Strevell family beginning about 1856. Strevell was a Pontiac attorney, State of Illinois representative and senator and became, through time, a close friend of Abraham Lincoln.

The house is the only remaining structure in the county where Abraham Lincoln spent any significant time.

Over the years, the pre-Civil War house was remodeled a few times and then broken up into apartments.

In 2008, when the building's owner contemplated razing the house, several Pontiac families joined together and purchased the property to preserve it for future generations.

In 2009, they transferred ownership of the home to the Livingston County Historical Society.

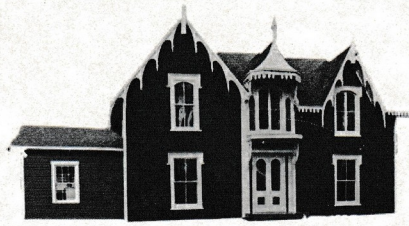
After being evaluated by several restoration professionals, a restoration plan was adopted and put into action.

From the kick-off event held in September 2010 until now, the house has been subject to a thorough restoration and rehabilitation treatment.



The Historical Society accepted the loan of a five-piece set of period furniture from the Mildred (Mickey) Harms family. The chairs and love seat will be used in the historic front parlor of the home. Tom Ewing is sitting to the right of Mickey Harms.

Historical Society Flier for Open House Day in 2018



JOIN US IN CELEBRATING
ILLINOIS' BICENTENNIAL
AND THE GRAND OPENING OF THE

STREVELL HOUSE

THE TWENTY-THIRD OF JUNE

SATURDAY
10:00-11:30

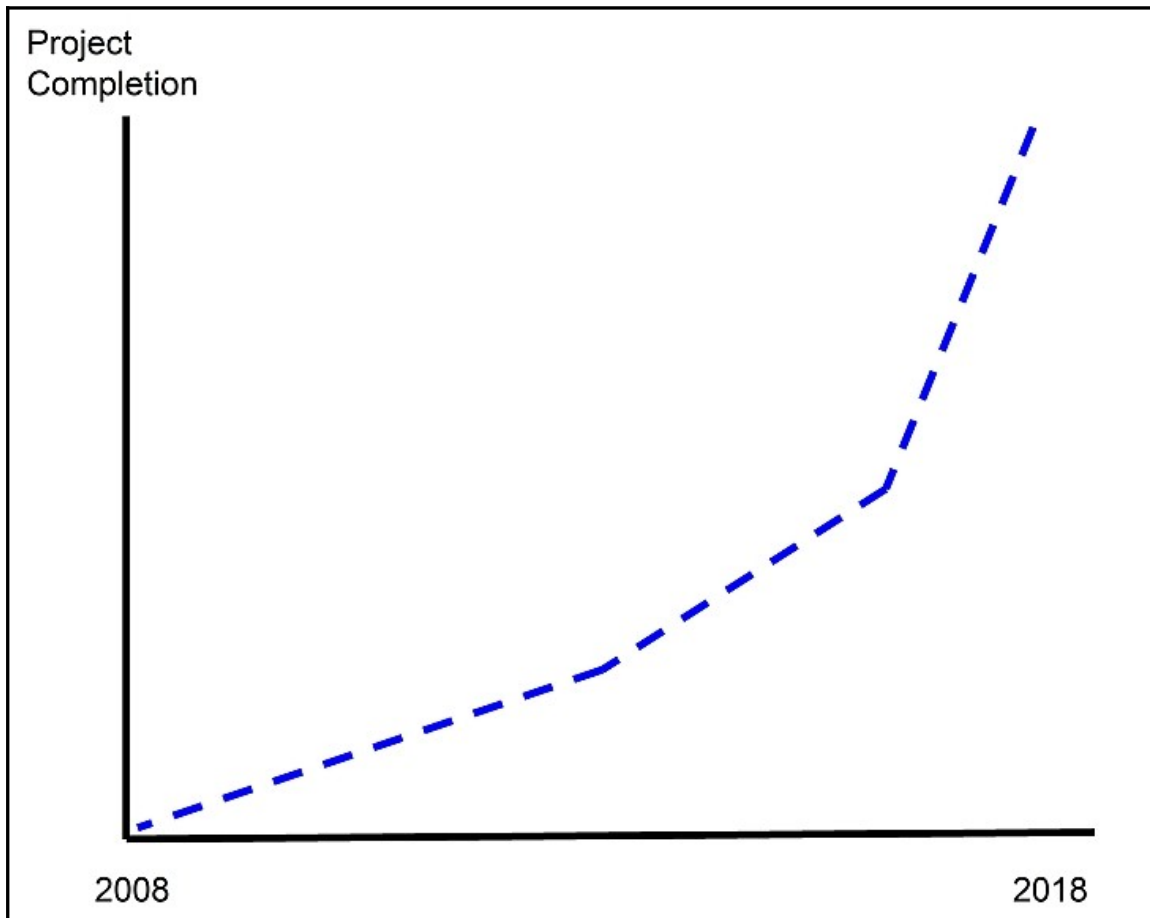
401 W LIVINGSTON
PONTIAC, IL
61764

OPEN HOUSE - NO RSVP NEEDED
HOSTED BY THE LIVINGSTON COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CONTINUE THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AT THE EAGLE
PERFORMING ARTS AND CONFERENCE CENTER WITH A FREE
PERFORMANCE AT 2:00PM
"THREE ILLINOIS WOMEN DURING THE CIVIL WAR"

House Renovation Progress Versus Time

Like many projects of this type, the chart of renovation progress versus time is not a straight line chart. The progress of the Strevell House renovation versus time has an approximate shape as shown below. Using records provided by Tom Ewing, the approximate completion curve was constructed.



In the early years of the project, progress was slow because funds had to be raised before any new work could be done. Most of the rapid progress was seen in the last two years of the project. In those last two years, Enbridge and Matrix companies donated money and their work crews quickly completed major projects. The City of Pontiac work crews also did some critical work during the winter months. These factors explain the rapid rate of completing the house refurbishment the last two years of the project.

The large conference room in the Strevell House was named the Enbridge Room because of the key support they provided to finish refurbishing the house.

Strevell House Open to the Public for Monthly Tours

After the grand opening celebration, the Strevell House joined the Yost and Jones Houses on the monthly public tour schedule. On the third Saturday of each month, all three homes are open to the public for free tours.

CHAPTER 20

2019 to 2020

The Pantagraph published an article on February 14, 2019, about Livingston County being added to the Lincoln Heritage Area.

U.S. Senate OKs adding to Lincoln heritage area

Two Lincoln-Douglas debate sites and another county would be added to the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area in Illinois under legislation approved in U.S. Senate.

The existing national heritage area, created by Congress in 2008, promotes Lincoln heritage and preservation in 42 central Illinois counties, including high-profile Lincoln sites in Springfield and surrounding counties.

The legislation approved Tuesday, Lincoln's birthday — included in larger bill called the Natural Resources Management Act — would add Lincoln-Douglas debate sites in the northern Illinois community of Freeport and the southern Illinois community of Jonesboro, as well as Livingston County at the northern edge of the existing heritage area.

Supporters say the expansion will increase economic opportunities for Illinoisans working to preserve the historic sites and create new recreation, tourism and educational projects.

The measure was introduced by Illinois' two Democratic senators, Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin. U.S. Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Channahon, has introduced companion legislation in the U.S. House. "Expanding the Lincoln National Heritage Area will give future generations of Illinois residents and visitors the chance to learn about President Lincoln's lasting legacy in our great state," Durbin, a Springfield resident, said in a statement. "This bill will also support Illinois communities and help grow the local economy by increasing access to federal grants for preservation and education."

The 42-county region, which stretches from the Indiana border to the Mississippi River, generates approximately \$260 million in economic impact, supports more than 3,000 jobs and generates \$25.5 million in tax revenue, supporters said.

The 43rd county that would be added, Livingston, includes the city of Pontiac, where Lincoln often traveled as a young lawyer in the 8th Judicial Circuit. Pontiac is also home to the Strevell-Lincoln House, the only remaining Livingston County structure visited by Lincoln.

Lincoln-Douglas debate sites in Freeport and Jonesboro are the only two of nine from the 1858 U.S. Senate debates currently outside the heritage area.

"By expanding the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area to 43 counties in central Illinois and the communities of Freeport and Jonesboro, we continue to increase the economic benefit of heritage tourism through telling the national significant story of the life and times of Abraham Lincoln's 30 years in Illinois," said Sarah Watson, executive director of Looking for Lincoln, the coordinating entity for the heritage area.

CHAPTER 21

2021

Exterior of Strevell House Painted in Summer of 2021

The house was prepared for painting in 2013 and then painted red with white trim.

In the Spring of 2021, eight years after the first painting, peeling red paint was found near the west second story window on the front of the house.

All loose paint was removed with a wire brush and the entire exterior of the house was painted red with white trim in the Summer of 2021. Semi-gloss white latex paint was used for the trim work. The siding boards were painted the same color of red as the first coat of paint. A man-lift was used to paint the upper white trim and spires.

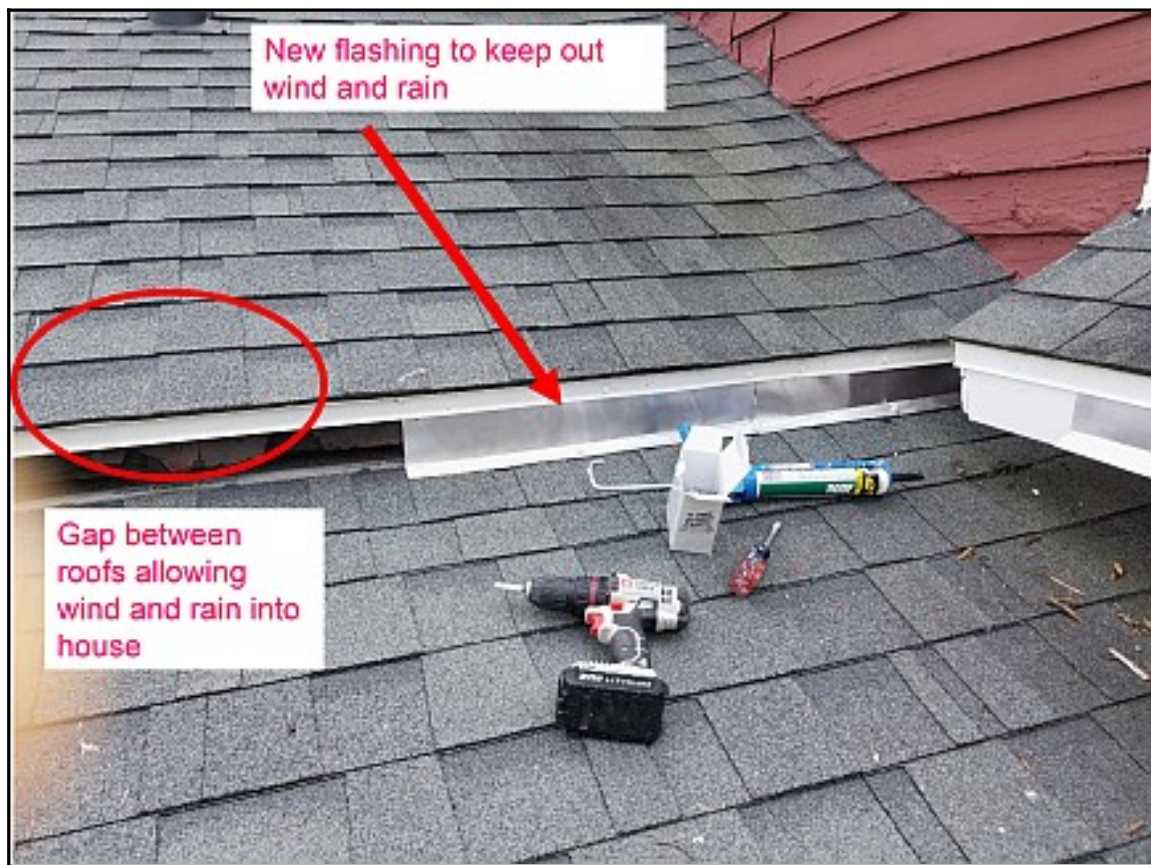


Strevell House in Fall of 2021 after entire exterior of house was repainted.

Repairing the Gap Between Roof Lines

While painting the house, a gap was found between the roof of the first floor restroom and the long first floor meeting room. This gap needed to be made weatherproof to prevent rain or snow from blowing into the house.

The roof of the restroom also has a definite dip down in the roof near the north-south center of the restroom. The best solution found was to make short pieces of aluminum flashing to fill the air gap between the roof lines. The short pieces of flashing also accommodated the dipping roof line of the restroom.

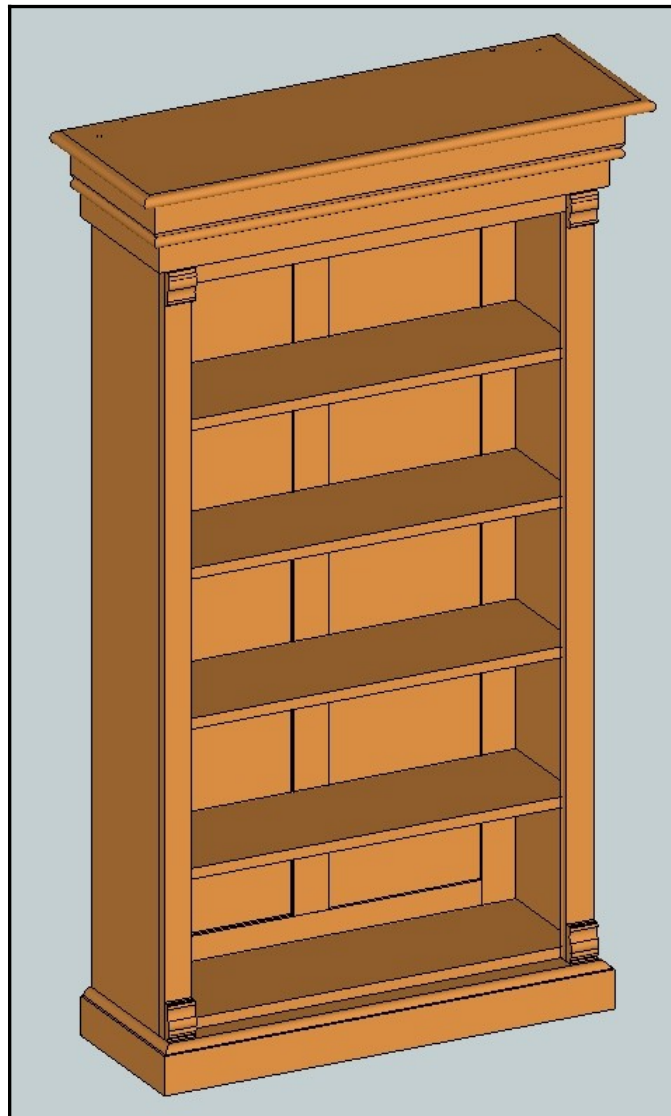


Addition of Period Correct Bookcases to Strevell House

A local Pontiac resident donated many Lincoln and Civil War related books to the Strevell House in 2021. Unfortunately, we had no bookcases to hold the books.

An Internet search was performed to try to find a photo or plans for an 1850s American bookcase. Unfortunately, no photos or plans could be found. The conclusion made was that in the 1850s, the average American family had no need for a bookcase because the home only had one book, the Bible.

A photo and measurements were found for an 1850s English bookcase. These plans were used to design a bookcase using the SketchUp drafting program. A copy of this SketchUp design can be downloaded at [Tinyurl.com/7jrvv95t](https://tinyurl.com/7jrvv95t).



The two finished red oak bookcases to display the Lincoln and Civil War books are shown below.



Chapter 22

2022

Strevell House Conference Meeting on July 16, 2022

A two-hour conference meeting was held at the Strevell House. The purpose of the meeting was to capture the thoughts of two of the three men who purchased the house in 2008 for the Historical Society and saved the house from the wrecking ball. These two men were Collins Miller and Tom Ewing.

Since the purchase of the house in 2008, Collins Miller has been extensively researching the history of the Nettleton family, the Strevell family, Abraham Lincoln. At that meeting, Collins Miller donated his research results to the Historical Society.

Tom Ewing was the Chairman of the Historical Society sub-committee in charge of refurbishing the house. Tom played an integral role in raising the funds required to completely renovate the home. Tom also personally helped in many of the refurbishment work required on the home. Mr. Ewing also donated his project documents to the Historical Society at that meeting.

Dale C. Maley, current President of the Historical Society, used the research collected by these two men to help write this book.

Joyce Nagel, Secretary of the Historical Society, videotaped this conference. This videotape was uploaded to YouTube and can be accessed at [Tinyurl.com/yc2uut47](https://tinyurl.com/yc2uut47).



Current Condition of the Home

The photographs below illustrate the condition of the home in 2022.



Top Photo: Looking at front door of house from Livingston Street.

Bottom Photo: Looking northeast at front of house from Livingston Street.



Top Photo: Looking southeast at back of house.

Bottom Photo: Looking southwest at back of house.



Top Photo: Looking southwest at east side of house.

Bottom Photo: Looking northwest at front of house.



Looking north at front door standing on memorial brick sidewalk south of front door.



Top Photo: Looking east at parlor in southeast corner of house.

Bottom Photo: Looking northeast at library from southwest corner of parlor.



Looking southwest at parlor door and front door from center of parlor.



Looking southeast at east wall of parlor from center of parlor.



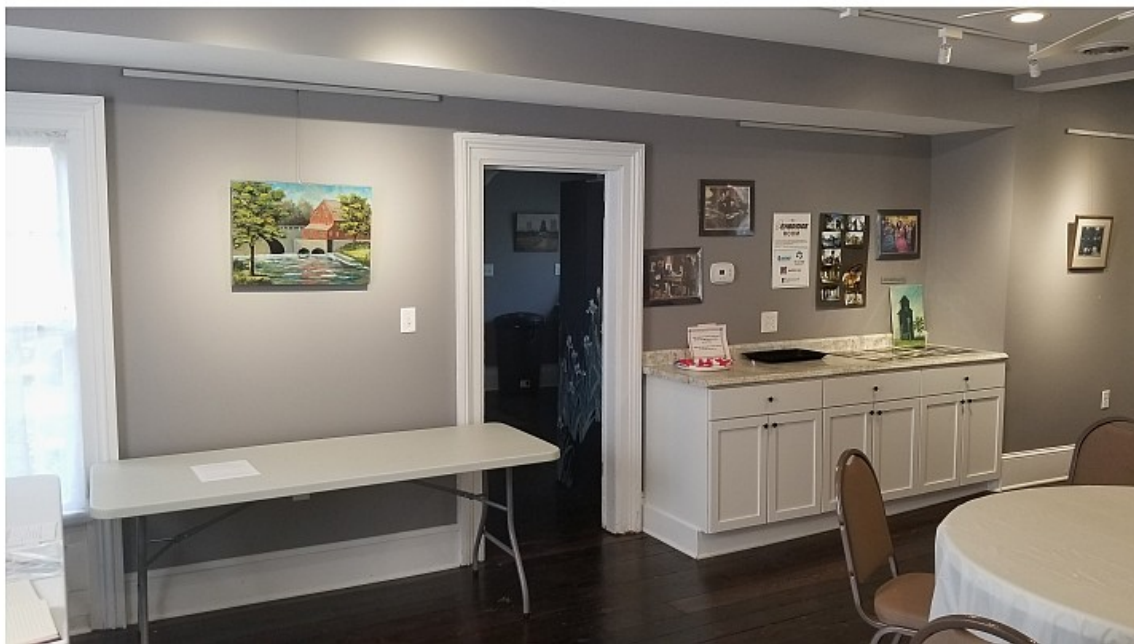
Looking north at library from center of parlor.



Looking south at hallway parallel to stairs from north end of hallway.



Looking northwest at stairs from front door.



Top Photo: Looking north at dining room from south end of dining room.

Bottom Photo: Looking northwest at west wall of dining room and kitchen doorway from southeast corner of dining room.



Top Photo: Looking south at south wall of dining room from center of dining room.

Bottom Photo: Looking southwest at west wall of kitchen from northeast corner of kitchen.



Top Photo: Looking southeast at south wall of kitchen from northwest corner of kitchen.

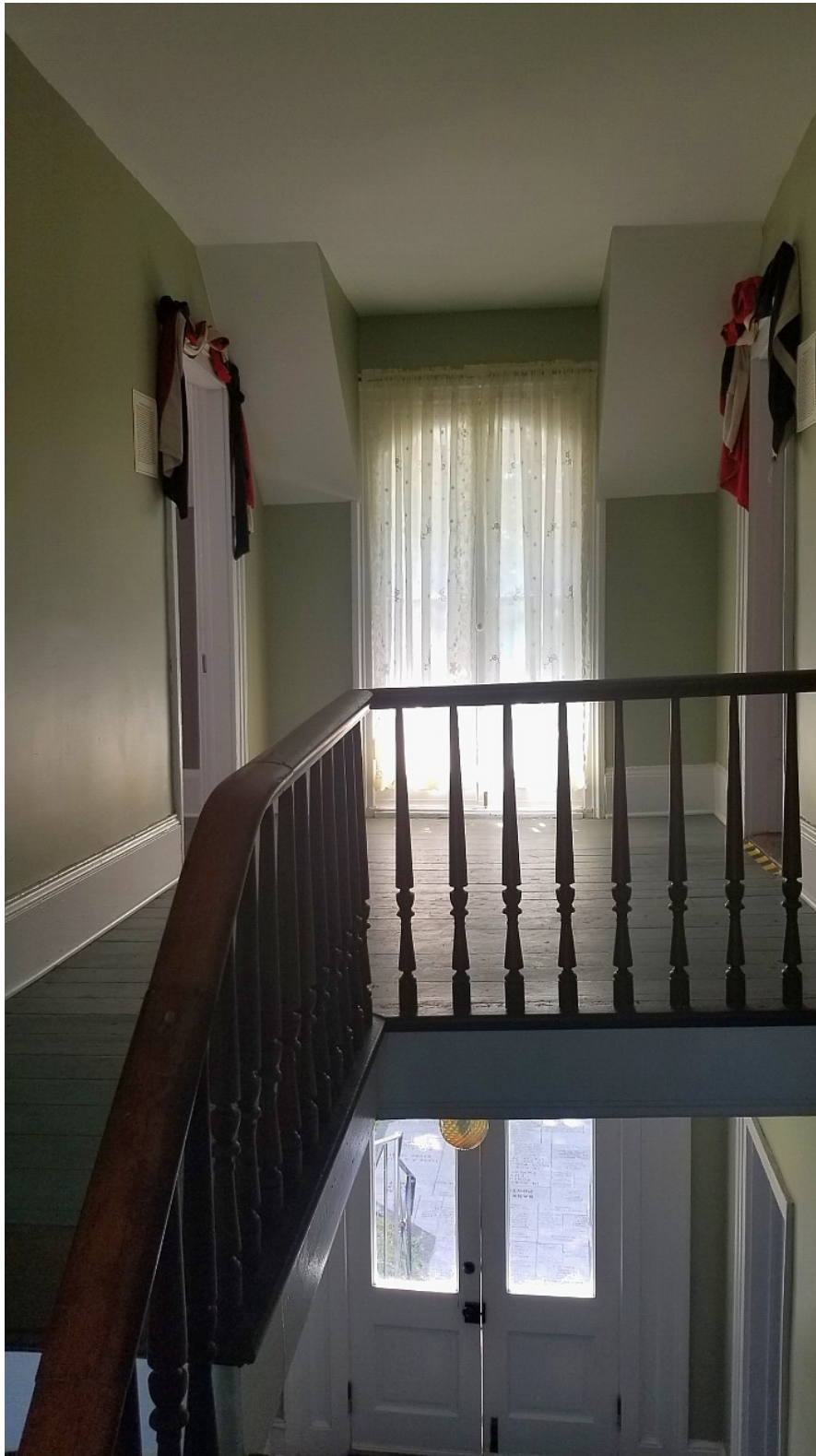
Bottom Photo: Looking northwest at north wall of kitchen from south side of kitchen.



Looking north at bathroom from bathroom doorway.



Looking north at stair landing half-way up the stairs from south end of stairs.



Looking south at second floor hallway from landing.



Looking northeast at east wall of northeast second story bedroom from bedroom door.



Looking south at south wall of second story northeast bedroom from north side of bedroom. Wall left unfinished so visitors can see how house was constructed.



Top Photo: Looking east at east wall of second story southeast bedroom from door.

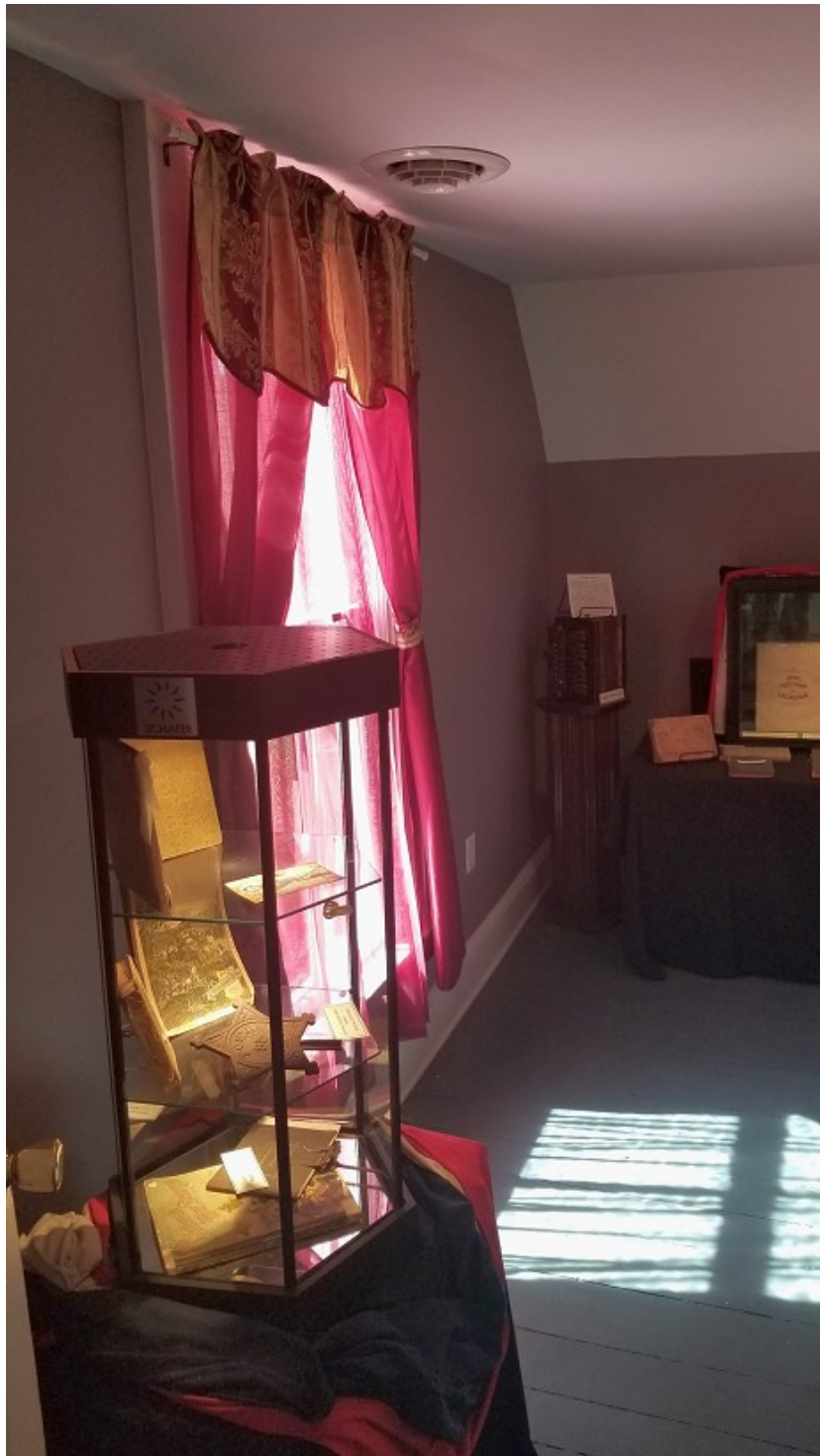
Bottom Photo: Looking northeast at north wall of second story southeast bedroom from door.



Looking west into southwest bedroom from hallway.



Looking northwest at north wall of southwest bedroom from door.



Looking southwest at south wall of southwest bedroom from door.

CHAPTER 23

Future Plans

Continue to Properly Maintain the Home

All old houses require more annual maintenance than modern homes. The Historical Society plans on continuing to keep the Strevell House well maintained so future generations can enjoy visiting the home.

National Register of Historic Places

The Jones House was added to this registry many years ago. The Historical Society plans to apply to have the Strevell House added to this registry.

The first part of this process is submit a preliminary application to the State of Illinois officials. This preliminary application was accepted and permissions was granted to start filling out the final federal application.

In October of 2022, some of the information in this book was used to prepare and submit the 53-page application to add the Strevell House to the National Register.

CHAPTER 24

Unsolved Mysteries

Whenever historical research is performed, there are always mysteries that arise. The story of the Strevell House also has its share of secrets.

What Happened to Mary Nettleton?

The 1855 Illinois Census includes a female under the age of ten in the household of Z. H. and Elizabeth Nettleton. The girl in this census was born between 1846 and 1854. By the time of the 1860 U.S. Census, this girl is no longer shown as a household member.

Sometime between 1930 and 1947, Charles Nettleton Strevell created a handwritten Strevell family genealogy document and filed it at the University of Utah library. In this document, C. N. Strevell identified that Zelus H. Nettleton and Elizabeth Kelly had a daughter named Mary Nettleton. This handwritten genealogy document is the only known reference for the first name of Mary for the Nettleton's daughter.

The Nettleton burial plots at the Pontiac Southside Cemetery have three illegible stones. One of these stones is short in height, and this size is typical for young children. The cemetery sexton is working on a project to clean and read the three stones. Maybe the tiny stone is for Mary Nettleton.

First and Middle Name for Z. H. Nettleton

Determining the first name for Z. H. Nettleton was a challenge. One source for his first name being Zelus is the 1850 U.S. Census, where his first name is listed as Zelus. The handwritten genealogy document that Charles Nettleton Strevell wrote includes the first name of Zelus. The first name of Zelus is also included on the original Title/Abstract document for 401 West Livingston Street. The application for adding the Constantine, Michigan, house to the National Registry of Historic Places also includes Zelus as his first name.

At this time, it is unknown what the middle name of Zelus H. Nettleton was.

Burial Location for Zelus H. Nettleton

Pontiac's Southside Cemetery records only show that Mr. Nettleton bought six plots for \$10. There are no other records. He bought Block 21 lots one through six in the Original Addition.

The Nettleton burial plots at the Pontiac Southside Cemetery have three illegible stones. The cemetery sexton is working on a project to clean and read the three stones. One of these stones is likely for Z. H. Nettleton.

J. W. Strevell purchased lots just to the east of the Nettleton plots. He sold them to Mr. Crawford when he moved to Montana. Charles Nettleton Strevell, the adopted son of J. W. Strevell, married Elizabeth Crawford.

The Year the House was Built at 401 West Livingston Street

Real estate records recount that Z. H. Nettleton bought the southeast corner of Block 27 in Pontiac, where 401 West Livingston Street was situated, on July 26, 1855. If Mr. Nettleton had started construction in July and had a mild winter, he could have finished building the house before January 1, 1856. It is probably more likely the house was started in July of 1855 but was not completed until early 1856.

Inspection of the house shows that the west half was built before the east side because of how the east section rafters were added to the west rafters. Tom Vance, the old house consultant, suggested that property tax records be consulted. These tax records might indicate what year the size of the house was roughly doubled.

The property tax records were found in the basement of the old Livingston County courthouse. The results of this research are shown below.

Property Tax History for Southeast Quarter of Block 27 - Pontiac				
Year	Owner	Property Value	Total Tax	
1854	G. Fellows	\$175	\$1.57	
1855	G. Fellows	\$300	\$4.56	
1856	Z. H. Nettleton	\$70	\$0.95	
1857	Z. H. Nettleton	\$550	\$9.16	
1858	Z. H. Nettleton	\$550	\$7.48	
1859	Z. H. Nettleton	\$550	\$9.89	
1860	Z. H. Nettleton	\$550	\$9.49	
1861	Z. H. Nettleton	\$800	\$13.04	
1862	Z. H. Nettleton	\$800	\$16.40	\$4.00 Bounty Tax

As shown in the table above, the results of this research were inconclusive in determining what year the east side was added to the west side. It is unknown why the value dropped to only \$70 in 1856. This extremely low valuation may have been an error by the tax collector.

One possible scenario is that Zelus Nettleton built a copy of the Carpenter Gothic house he built in Constantine, Michigan. He died unexpectedly, and Jason W. Strevell then decided to add on the east side of the home.

What Ever Happened to John K. Nettleton and His Wife Olive Potter?

The last U.S. Census to show them was the 1880 Census, and they lived in Joliet. John was 30, Olive was 27, son Wilson H. Nettleton was nine, and daughter Lizzie K. Nettleton was one year of age.

In 1933, Charles Nettleton Strevell received a telegram from John K. Nettleton in the Dells in Oregon. John was living in Minnesota and had gone west searching for work. Charles did not receive the telegram in time to reply to John. In 1933, John K. Nettleton was 84 years of age.

At this time, what happened to John K. Nettleton and Olive Potter is unknown.

What Happened to the Door Frame Piece with Lincoln's Height?

According to Charles Nettleton Strevell's two books, the door frame piece was displayed at the Strevell Museum in Salt Lake City in 1943. Another museum later absorbed this museum. Within the last ten years, the new museum was contacted, and they have no record of any Lincoln-related door frame. This piece of wood is currently lost.

Why Did the Jason Strevell Family Choose to be Buried in Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery?

Jason Strevell was born in the Albany, New York, area. His wife, Elizabeth Butler Kelly, was born in the Constantine, Michigan, area. Jason and Elizabeth Strevell lived in Pontiac for roughly 24 years before moving to Montana.

The first death in this family was Helen, the daughter of Jason and Elizabeth Strevell, in 1887 in Montana. She was apparently buried in Miles City, Montana, for a couple of years.

Two years later, in 1889, Willie Strevell died in Miles City at the age of seven. The family chose to have Willie buried in Rosehill Cemetery. At the same time, they had Helen exhumed and shipped to Chicago for burial in Rosehill. Since Willie and Helen died in Miles City, it would have made sense to bury them there.

A check was made to see if any family relatives were previously buried in Rosehill Cemetery. No relatives were found. At this time, it is unknown why the family chose to be buried in Rosehill Cemetery.

Birth of Helen Strevell on the Same Day that Lincoln Visited the Strevell House

Helen Strevell was the one and only child of Jason and Elizabeth Strevell. She was born on January 27, 1860, the same day Lincoln visited the home.

In 1901, Charles Nettleton Strevell asked his father to write to him and describe the night of the Lincoln visit. In his letter to his son, there is no mention of the birth of his only child occurring the same day that Lincoln visited the home.

Unfortunately, Helen Strevell died in 1887 when she was just 27 years of age. Helen's death was likely a devastating life event for Jason Strevell. Maybe he did not mention Helen's birth on the same day as Lincoln's visit because her death 14 years earlier was still painful to remember.

Minnesota Land Transactions by Dr. John Kelly

The land transactions done by Dr. Kelly are confusing in that he purchased the land from the federal government as expected, but then he had to repeat these transactions a few years later for the same pieces of land. More investigation by someone familiar with Minnesota's early real estate transactions could possibly explain this mystery.

What Happened to the Abraham Lincoln Invitation to the Strevells to Visit the White House?

Charles Nettleton Strevell loved history and saved many family-related documents, which were stored at the Library at the University of Utah. One would think that he would have saved an invitation to his father from the President of the United States. This invitation was not in the many boxes of Strevell material stored at the Library. It is unknown what happened to this invitation from Abraham Lincoln.

CHAPTER 25

Summarizing the Strevell House Story

The story of the Nettleton/Strevell families and the house at 401 West Livingston Street in Pontiac, Illinois, is fascinating and summarized below.

Zelus Nettleton started construction of the house and likely finished it sometime between the end of 1855 and early 1856. Zelus and his wife had a son and a daughter when they moved to Pontiac. Young lawyer Jason W. Strevell moved from New York to Pontiac in 1855. Z. H. Nettleton and Jason W. Strevell likely knew each other since they were both involved with early Pontiac civic activities.

Elizabeth Kelly-Strevell became pregnant, and Zelus Nettleton died in 1857 before the baby was born. After the baby was born, Jason W. Strevell married the widow Strevell and eventually adopted the infant boy, Charles Nettleton.

Abraham Lincoln gave a lecture at the Pontiac Presbyterian Church on January 27, 1860. After the talk, Mr. Lincoln spent the afternoon and early evening at the home of Jason Strevell. Mr. Strevell measured Mr. Lincoln's height of six feet four inches and marked it on the door casing.

Mr. Strevell went on to serve two terms as an Illinois State Representative and one term as an Illinois State Senator. His adopted son, Charles Nettleton Strevell, served as a page in Springfield while his father was a State Senator. As a State Senator, Jason Strevell introduced a bill to have the new Boy's Reformatory sited at Pontiac, Illinois. The new reformatory was built in Pontiac and is today the Pontiac Correctional Center.

Jason Strevell enjoyed vacationing and hunting in the Yellowstone River country of Montana. Because of his son's health and partially because he liked the frontier country, Jason Strevell moved his family to Miles City, Utah, in 1879.

Jason W. Strevell did not adopt stepson John K. Nettleton. John went west to Nebraska on a surveying expedition and narrowly escaped with his life. After returning to Pontiac after the journey, John K. Nettleton married local girl Olive A. Potter. John then sued his stepfather, Jason W. Strevell, claiming that he should have inherited some of his father's property when his father died. John K. Nettleton won the case, but the family became estranged after the lawsuit. John moved his family to Joliet and then disappeared from the annals of history.

After Jason Strevell's adopted son Charles Nettleton Strevell moved to Montana with his parents, he returned to Pontiac to marry local girl Elizabeth Crawford. Charles and Elizabeth Strevell moved to Montana, and Charles ran a hardware store. They had one child, a son, Willie Strevell, who unfortunately died when he was only six years old.

Jason and Elizabeth Strevell had one child together, Helen Strevell. Shortly after the family moved to Miles City, Montana, Helen married George Miles. They had one child, Jason Daniel Miles. Unfortunately, Helen Strevell-Miles died in 1887 when she was only 27 years old.

Jason Strevell became a well-respected lawyer in Montana and pursued several business interests. Jason's wife, Elizabeth Kelly, was restricted to her bedroom for the last 14 years of her life, but she continued to write and publish poems. She died in 1902 in Miles City, Montana. Just a few months later, Jason W. Strevell passed away in 1903 at the age of 71. When Jason Strevell died, he was worth \$6.24 million in today's dollars.

Adopted son Charles N. Strevell moved from Montana to Ogden, Utah, and eventually to Salt Lake City. Charles became the owner of the largest hardware store in Salt Lake City. Charles Strevell was a delegate to the Utah constitutional convention.

Charles Strevell was a lifelong collector of historical artifacts. He collected many items when he lived in Montana and Utah. He eventually formed a museum using his extensive collection and donated it to the Salt Lake City school system. Charles N. Strevell had the door frame piece with Lincoln's height marked on it removed from the 401 West Livingston in Pontiac house and included it in his museum. Unfortunately, the first museum was absorbed by a second museum, and the door casing is currently lost.

Both Charles N. Strevell and his wife died in Salt Lake City. Almost all of the Strevell and Miles family are buried in Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery.

In 2008, the house at 401 West Livingston was in a bad state of repair and was slated for demolition. Three local leaders saved the home from the wrecking ball by purchasing it in 2008 for \$40,000. The house was then donated to the Livingston County Historical Society. It took ten years, but the Historical Society completely refurbished the house. The grand opening ceremony was held in 2018.

Free public tours of the Strevell House are conducted on the third Saturday of each month. Hopefully, the refurbished home will provide future Livingston County residents with a tangible link to the time of Abraham Lincoln before he became President of the United States.

CHAPTER 26

Closing Thoughts

Without the vision of Guy Fraker, Tom Ewing, Collins Miller, and Donovan Gardner, it is highly likely the historic home that Lincoln visited in 1860 would have been demolished forever in 2008. Because of their vision, the house today is fully restored. Every month local citizens visit it and learn about the Pontiac connection to Abraham Lincoln before he became President of the United States.

The ten-year project to restore the home required a community effort. The many individuals, organizations, and businesses donating their time and money to refurbish this house are commended for their community effort.

The Nettleton and Strevell families were pioneer settlers of Central Illinois. The Strevell family also contributed to the settlement of both Montana and Utah. These family stories mirror the exploration and development of the United States in the 1850 to 1900 era.

Appendix One

Lincoln's Lecture

A web site recounts that Lincoln gave the same lecture at Bloomington, Jacksonville, Decatur, Springfield, and Pontiac. This website can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/54e7mebk.

This web site recounts that one of Lincoln's skills was not in the delivery of exciting lectures.

On April 6, 1858, Abraham Lincoln gave his first lecture on "Discoveries and Inventions" before the Young Men's Association of Bloomington, Illinois. In 1859 he delivered it in Jacksonville, Illinois. He repeated the lecture in Decatur, Springfield, and Pontiac, but turned down future requests, saying, "I am not a professional lecturer. Have never got up but one lecture; and that I think, a rather poor one."

His law partner, William H. Herndon, recalled Lincoln's work on the project. "He began preparation in the usual way by noting down ideas on stray pieces of paper, which found a lodgment inside his hat, and finally brought forth in connected form a lecture." But unlike his political speeches and courtroom presentations, the lecture lacked life.

Herndon said, "he delivered it at several towns in the central part of the State, but it was so commonplace, and met with such indifferent success, that he soon dropped it altogether." Herndon could not resist comparing it to his Eulogy on Henry Clay, saying, "If his address in 1852, over the death of Clay, proved that he was no eulogist, then this last effort demonstrated that he was no lecturer."

Lincoln, however, did not lack interest in inventions. Ten years before, he received a patent for an invention which lifted boats over shoals, a device which never was manufactured. In the speech below, you will see the combined text of what was once believed to be two speeches. When the *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* was originally compiled, researchers did not know Lincoln had prepared only one.

Lincoln's Lecture

Lincoln's lecture was 5,629 words long and is shown below.

All creation is a mine, and every man, a miner.

The whole earth, and all *within* it, *upon* it, and *round about* it, including *himself*, in his physical, moral, and intellectual nature, and his susceptibilities, are the infinitely various "leads" from which, man, from the first, was to dig out his destiny.

In the beginning, the mine was unopened, and the miner stood *naked*, and *knowledgeless*, upon it.

Fishes, birds, beasts, and creeping things, are not miners, but *feeders* and *lodgers*, merely. Beavers build houses; but they build them in nowise differently, or better now, than they did, five thousand years ago. Ants, and honey-bees, provide food for winter; but just in the *same way* they did, when Solomon referred the sluggard to them as patterns of prudence.

Man is not the only animal who labors; but he is the only one who *improves* his workmanship. This improvement, he effects by *Discoveries*, and *Inventions*. His first important discovery was the fact that he was naked; and his first invention was the fig-leaf-apron. This simple article -- the apron -- made of leaves, seems to have been the origin of *clothing* -- the one thing for which nearly half of the toil and care of the human race has ever since been expended. The most important improvement ever made in connection with clothing, was the invention of *spinning* and *weaving*. The spinning jenny, and power-loom, invented in modern times, though great *improvements*, do not, as *inventions*, rank with the ancient arts of spinning and weaving. Spinning and weaving brought into the department of clothing such abundance and variety of material. Wool, the hair of several species of animals, hemp, flax, cotton, silk, and perhaps other articles, were all suited to it, affording garments not only adapted to wet and dry, heat and cold, but also susceptible of high degrees of ornamental finish. Exactly *when*, or *where*, spinning and weaving originated is not known. At the first interview of the Almighty with Adam and Eve, after the fall, He made "coats of skins, and clothed them" Gen: 3-21.

The Bible makes no other allusion to clothing, *before* the flood. Soon *after* the deluge Noah's two sons covered him with a *garment*; but of what *material* the garment was made is not mentioned. Gen. 9-23.

Abraham mentions "*thread*" in such connection as to indicate that spinning and weaving were in use in his day -- Gen. 14.23 -- and soon after, reference to the art is frequently made. "*Linen breeches*, [""] are mentioned, -- Exod. 28.42 -- and it is said "all the women that were wise hearted, did spin with their hands" (35-

25) and, "all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom, *spun* goat's hair" (35-26). The work of the "*weaver*" is mentioned -- (35-35). In the book of Job, a very old book, date not exactly known, the "*weavers shuttle*" is mentioned.

The above mention of "*thread*" by Abraham is the oldest recorded allusion to spinning and weaving; and *it* was made about two thousand years after the creation of man, and now, near four thousand years ago. Profane authors think these arts originated in Egypt; and this is not contradicted, or made improbable, by any thing in the Bible; for the allusion of Abraham, mentioned, was not made until after he had sojourned in Egypt.

The discovery of the properties of *iron*, and the making of *iron tools*, must have been among the earliest of important discoveries and inventions. We can scarcely conceive the possibility of making much of anything else, without the use of iron tools. Indeed, an iron *hammer* must have been very much needed to make the *first* iron hammer with. A *stone* probably served as a substitute. How could the "*gopher wood*" for the Ark, have been gotten out without an axe? It seems to me an axe, or a miracle, was indispensable. Corresponding with the prime necessity for iron, we find at least one very early notice of it. Tubal-cain was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron["] -- Gen: 4-22. Tubal-cain was the seventh in decent from Adam; and his birth was about one thousand years before the flood. *After* the flood, frequent mention is made of *iron*, and *instruments* made of iron. Thus "instrument of iron" at Num: 35-16; "bedstead of iron" at Deut. 3-11 -- "the iron furnace ["] at 4-20 -- and "iron tool" at 27-5. At 19-5 -- very distinct mention of "the ax to cut down the tree" is made; and also at 8-9, the promised land is described as "a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." From the somewhat frequent mention of brass in connection with iron, it is not improbable that brass -- perhaps what we now call copper -- was used by the ancients for some of the same purposes as iron.

Transportation -- the removal of person, and goods -- from place to place -- would be an early *object*, if not a *necessity*, with man. By his natural powers of locomotion, and without much assistance from Discovery and invention, he could move himself about with considerable facility; and even, could carry small burthens with him. But very soon he would wish to lessen the labor, while he might, at the same time, extend, and expedite the business. For this object, wheel-carriages, and water-crafts -- wagons and boats -- are the most important inventions. The use of the wheel & axle, has been so long known, that it is difficult, without reflection, to estimate it at it's true value.

The oldest recorded allusion to the wheel and axle is the mention of a "chariot" Gen: 41-43. This was in Egypt, upon the occasion of Joseph being made Governor by Pharaoh. It was about twenty-five hundred years after the creation

of Adam. That the chariot then mentioned was a wheel-carriage drawn by animals, is sufficiently evidenced by the mention of chariot-*wheels*, at Exod. 14-25, and the mention of chariots in connection with *horses*, in the same chapter, verses 9 & 23. So much, at present, for land-transportation.

Now, as to transportation by *water*, I have concluded, without sufficient authority perhaps, to use the term "boat" as a general name for all water-craft. The boat is indispensable to navigation. It is not probable that the philosophical principle upon which the use of the boat primarily depends -- to wit, the *principle*, that any thing will float, which can not sink without displacing more than it's own *weight* of water -- was known, or even thought of, before the first boats were made. The sight of a crow standing on a piece of drift-wood floating down the swollen current of a creek or river, might well enough suggest the specific idea to a savage, that he could himself get upon a log, or on two logs tied together, and somehow work his way to the opposite shore of the same stream. Such a suggestion, so taken, would be the birth of navigation; and such, not improbably, it really was. The leading idea was thus caught; and whatever came afterwards, were but improvements upon, and auxiliaries to, it.

As man is a land animal, it might be expected he would learn to travel by land somewhat earlier than he would by water. Still the crossing of streams, somewhat too deep for wading, would be an early necessity with him. If we pass by the Ark, which may be regarded as belonging rather to the *miraculous*, than to *human* invention the first notice we have of water-craft, is the mention of "ships" by Jacob -- Gen: 49-13. It is not till we reach the book of Isaiah that we meet with the mention of "oars" and "sails."

As man's *food* -- his first necessity -- was to be derived from the vegetation of the earth, it was natural that his first care should be directed to the assistance of that vegetation. And accordingly we find that, even before the fall, the man was put into the garden of Eden "to dress it, and to keep it." And when afterwards, in consequence of the first transgression, *labor* was imposed on the race, as a *penalty* -- a *curse* -- we find the first born man -- the first heir of the curse -- was "a tiller of the ground." This was the beginning of agriculture; and although, both in point of time, and of importance, it stands at the head of all branches of human industry, it has derived less direct advantage from Discovery and Invention, than almost any other. The plow, of very early origin; and reaping, and threshing, machines, of modern invention are, at this day, the principle improvements in agriculture. And even the oldest of these, the plow, could not have been conceived of, until a precedent conception had been caught, and put into practice -- I mean the conception, or idea, of substituting other forces in nature, for man's own muscular power. These other forces, as now used, are principally, the *strength* of animals, and the *power* of the wind, of running streams, and of steam.

Climbing upon the back of an animal, and making it carry us, might not, occur very readily. I think the back of the camel would never have suggested it. It was, however, a matter of vast importance.

The earliest instance of it mentioned, is when "Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass,["] Gen. 22-3 preparatory to sacrificing Isaac as a burnt-offering; but the allusion to the *saddle* indicates that riding had been in use some time; for it is quite probable they rode bare-backed awhile, at least, before they invented saddles.

The *idea*, being once conceived, of riding *one* species of animals, would soon be extended to others. Accordingly we find that when the servant of Abraham went in search of a wife for Isaac, he took ten *camels* with him; and, on his return trip, "Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man" Gen 24-61[.]

The *horse*, too, as a riding animal, is mentioned early. The Red-sea being safely passed, Moses and the children of Israel sang to the Lord "the *horse*, and his *rider* hath he thrown into the sea." Exo. 15-1.

Seeing that animals could bear *man* upon their backs, it would soon occur that they could also bear other burthens. Accordingly we find that Joseph's brethren, on their first visit to Egypt, "laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence" Gen. 42-26.

Also it would occur that animals could be made to *draw* burthens *after* them, as well as to bear them upon their backs; and hence plows and chariots came into use early enough to be often mentioned in the books of Moses -- Deut. 22-10. Gen. 41-43. Gen. 46-29. Exo. 14-25[.]

Of all the forces of nature, I should think the *wind* contains the largest amount of *motive power* -- that is, power to move things. Take any given space of the earth's surface -- for instance, Illinois --; and all the power exerted by all the men, and beasts, and running-water, and steam, over and upon it, shall not equal the one hundredth part of what is exerted by the blowing of the wind over and upon the same space. And yet it has not, so far in the world's history, become proportionally *valuable* as a motive power. It is applied extensively, and advantageously, to sail-vessels in navigation. Add to this a few wind-mills, and pumps, and you have about all. That, as yet, no very successful mode of *controlling*, and *directing* the wind, has been discovered; and that, naturally, it moves by fits and starts -- now so gently as to scarcely stir a leaf, and now so roughly as to level a forest -- doubtless have been the insurmountable difficulties. As yet, the wind is an *untamed*, and *unharnessed* force; and quite possibly one of the greatest discoveries hereafter to be made, will be the taming, and harnessing of the wind. That the difficulties of controlling this power are very great is quite evident by the fact that they have already been perceived, and

struggled with more than three thousand years; for that power was applied to sail-vessels, at least as early as the time of the prophet Isaiah.

In speaking of *running streams*, as a motive power, I mean it's application to mills and other machinery by means of the "*water wheel*" -- a thing now well known, and extensively used; but, of which, no mention is made in the bible, though it is thought to have been in use among the Romans -- (Am. Ency. tit--- Mill) [.] The language of the Saviour "Two women shall be grinding at the mill &c" indicates that, even in the populous city of Jerusalem, at that day, mills were operated by hand -- having, as yet had no other than human power applied to them.

The advantageous use of *Steam-power* is, unquestionably, a modern discovery.

And yet, as much as two thousand years ago the power of steam was not only observed, but an ingenious toy was actually made and put in motion by it, at Alexandria in Egypt.

What appears strange is, that neither the inventor of the toy, nor any one else, for so long a time afterwards, should perceive that steam would move *useful* machinery as well as a toy.

We have all heard of Young America. He is the most *current* youth of the age. Some think him conceited, and arrogant; but has he not reason to entertain a rather extensive opinion of himself? Is he not the inventor and owner of the *present*, and sole hope of the *future*? Men, and things, everywhere, are ministering unto him. Look at his apparel, and you shall see cotton fabrics from Manchester and Lowell; flax-linen from Ireland; wool-cloth from [Spain;] silk from France; furs from the Arctic regions, with a buffalo-robe from the Rocky Mountains, as a general outrider. At his table, besides plain bread and meat made at home, are sugar from Louisiana; coffee and fruits from the tropics; salt from Turk's Island; fish from New-foundland; tea from China, and spices from the Indies. The whale of the Pacific furnishes his candle-light; he has a diamond-ring from Brazil; a gold-watch from California, and a Spanish cigar from Havanna. He not only has a present supply of all these, and much more; but thousands of hands are engaged in producing fresh supplies, and other thousands, in bringing them to him. The iron horse is panting, and impatient, to carry him everywhere, in no time; and the lightening stands ready harnessed to take and bring his tidings in a trifle less than no time. He owns a large part of the world, by right of possessing it; and all the rest by right of *wanting* it, and *intending* to have it. As Plato had for the immortality of the soul, so Young America has "a pleasing hope -- a fond desire -- a longing after" territory. He has a great passion -- a perfect rage -- for the "*new*"; particularly new men for office, and the new earth mentioned in the revelations, in which, being no more sea, there must be about three times as much land as in the present. He is a great

friend of humanity; and his desire for land is not selfish, but merely an impulse to extend the area of freedom. He is very anxious to fight for the liberation of enslaved nations and colonies, provided, always, they *have* land, and have *not* any liking for his interference. As to those who have no land, and would be glad of help from any quarter, he considers *they* can afford to wait a few hundred years longer. In knowledge he is particularly rich. He knows all that can possibly be known; inclines to believe in spiritual rappings, and is the unquestioned inventor of "*Manifest Destiny*." His horror is for all that is old, particularly "Old Fogy"; and if there be any thing old which he can endure, it is only old whiskey and old tobacco.

If the said Young America really is, as he claims to be, the owner of all present, it must be admitted that he has considerable advantage of Old Fogy. Take, for instance, the first of all fogies, father Adam. There he stood, a very perfect physical man, as poets and painters inform us; but he must have been very ignorant, and simple in his habits. He had had no sufficient time to learn much by observation; and he had no near neighbors to teach him anything. No part of his breakfast had been brought from the other side of the world; and it is quite probable, he had no conception of the world having any other side. In all of these things, it is very plain, he was no equal of Young America; the most that can be said is, that *according to his chance* he may have been quite as much of a man as his very self-complaisant descendant. Little as was what he knew, let the Youngster discard all he has learned from others, and then show, if he can, any advantage on his side. In the way of *land*, and *live stock*, Adam was quite in the ascendant. He had dominion over all the earth, and all the living things upon, and round about it. The land has been sadly divided out since; but never fret, Young America will *re-annex* it.

The great difference between Young America and Old Fogy, is the result of *Discoveries, Inventions, and Improvements*. These, in turn, are the result of *observation, reflection* and *experiment*. For instance, it is quite certain that ever since water has been boiled in covered vessels, men have seen the lids of the vessels rise and fall a little, with a sort of fluttering motion, by force of the steam; but so long as this was not specially observed, and reflected and experimented upon, it came to nothing. At length however, after many thousand years, some man observes this long-known effect of hot water lifting a pot-lid, and begins a train of reflection upon it. He says "Why, to be sure, the force that lifts the pot-lid, will lift any thing else, which is no heavier than the pot-lid." "And, as man has much hard lifting to do, can not this hot-water power be made to help him?" He has become a little excited on the subject, and he fancies he hears a voice answering "Try me" He does try it; and the *observation, reflection, and trial* gives to the world the control of that tremendous, and now well known agent, called steam-power. This is not the actual history in detail, but the general principle.

But was this first inventor of the application of steam, wiser or more ingenious than those who had gone before him? Not at all. Had he not learned much of them, he never would have succeeded -- probably, never would have thought of making the attempt. To be fruitful in invention, it is indispensable to have a *habit* of observation and reflection; and this *habit*, our steam friend acquired, no doubt, from those who, to him, were old fogies. But for the difference in *habit* of observation, why did yankees, almost instantly, discover gold in California, which had been trodden upon, and over-looked by indians and Mexican greasers, for centuries? Gold-mines are not the only mines overlooked in the same way. There are more mines above the Earth's surface than below it. All nature -- the whole world, material, moral, and intellectual, -- is a mine; and, in Adam's day, it was a wholly unexplored mine. Now, it was the destined work of Adam's race to develop, by discoveries, inventions, and improvements, the hidden treasures of this mine. But Adam had nothing to turn his attention to the work. If he should do anything in the way of invention, he had first to invent the art of invention -- the *instance* at least, if not the *habit* of observation and reflection. As might be expected he seems not to have been a very observing man at first; for it appears he went about naked a considerable length of time, before he even noticed that obvious fact. But when he did observe it, the observation was not lost upon him; for it immediately led to the first of all inventions, of which we have any direct account -- *the fig-leaf apron*.

The inclination to exchange thoughts with one another is probably an original impulse of our nature. If I be in pain I wish to let you know it, and to ask your sympathy and assistance; and my pleasurable emotions also; I wish to communicate to, and share with you. But to carry on such communication, some *instrumentality* is indispensable. Accordingly speech -- articulate sounds rattled off from the tongue -- was used by our first parents, and even by Adam, before the creation of Eve. He gave names to the animals while she was still a bone in his side; and he broke out quite volubly when she first stood before him, the best present of his maker. From this it would appear that speech was not an invention of man, but rather the direct gift of his Creator. But whether Divine gift, or invention, it is still plain that if a mode of communication had been left to invention, *speech* must have been the first, from the superior adaptation to the end, of the organs of speech, over every other means within the whole range of nature. Of the organs of speech the tongue is the principal; and if we shall test it, we shall find the capacities of the tongue, in the utterance of articulate sounds, absolutely wonderful. You can count from one to one hundred, quite distinctly in about forty seconds. In doing this two hundred and eighty three distinct sounds or syllables are uttered, being seven to each second; and yet there shall be enough difference between every two, to be easily recognized by the ear of the hearer. What other *signs* to represent *things* could possibly be produced so rapidly? or, even, if ready made, could be *arranged* so rapidly to express the

sense? *Motions* with the hands, are no adequate substitute. *Marks* for the recognition of the eye -- *writing* -- although a wonderful auxiliary for speech, is no worthy substitute for it. In addition to the more slow and laborious process of getting up a communication in writing, the materials -- pen, ink, and paper -- are not always at hand. But one always has his tongue with him, and the breath of his life is the ever-ready material with which it works. Speech, then, by enabling different individuals to interchange thoughts, and thereby to combine their powers of observation and reflection, greatly facilitates useful discoveries and inventions. What one observes, and would himself infer nothing from, he tells to another, and that other at once sees a valuable hint in it. A result is thus reached which neither *alone* would have arrived at.

And this reminds me of what I passed unnoticed before, that the very first invention was a joint operation. Eve having shared with Adam in the getting up of the apron. And, indeed, judging from the fact that sewing has come down to our times as "woman's work" it is very probable she took the leading part; he, perhaps, doing no more than to stand by and thread the needle. That proceeding may be reckoned as the mother of all "Sewing societies"; and the first and most perfect "world's fair" all inventions and all inventors then in the world, being on the spot.

But speech alone, valuable as it ever has been, and is, has not advanced the condition of the world much. This is abundantly evident when we look at the degraded condition of all those tribes of human creatures who have no considerable additional means of communicating thoughts. *Writing* -- the art of communicating thoughts to the mind, through the eye -- is the great invention of the world. Great in the astonishing range of analysis and combination which necessarily underlies the most crude and general conception of it -- great, very great in enabling us to converse with the dead, the absent, and the unborn, at all distances of time and of space; and great, not only in its direct benefits, but greatest help, to all other inventions. Suppose the art, with all conception of it, were this day lost to the world, how long, think you, would it be, before even Young America could get up the letter A. with any adequate notion of using it to advantage? The precise period at which writing was invented, is not known; but it certainly was as early as the time of Moses; from which we may safely infer that it's inventors were very old fogies.

Webster, at the time of writing his Dictionary, speaks of the English Language as then consisting of seventy or eighty thousand words. If so, the language in which the five books of Moses were written must, at that time, now thirty three or four hundred years ago, have consisted of at least one quarter as many, or, twenty thousand. When we remember that words are *sounds* merely, we shall conclude that the idea of representing those sounds by *marks*, so that whoever should at any time after see the marks, would understand what sounds they

meant, was a bold and ingenious conception, not likely to occur to one man of a million, in the run of a thousand years. And, when it did occur, a distinct mark for each word, giving twenty thousand different marks first to be learned, and afterwards remembered, would follow as the second thought, and would present such a difficulty as would lead to the conclusion that the whole thing was impracticable. But the *necessity* still would exist; and we may readily suppose that the idea was conceived, and lost, and reproduced, and dropped, and taken up again and again, until at last, the thought of dividing sounds into parts, and making a mark, not to represent a whole sound, but only a part of one, and then of combining these marks, not very many in number, upon the principles of permutation, so as to represent any and all of the whole twenty thousand words, and even any additional number was somehow conceived and pushed into practice. This was the invention of *phonetic* writing, as distinguished from the clumsy picture writing of some of the nations. That it was difficult of conception and execution, is apparent, as well by the foregoing reflections, as by the fact that so many tribes of men have come down from Adam's time to ours without ever having possessed it. Its utility may be conceived, by the reflection that, to *it* we owe everything which distinguishes us from savages. Take it from us, and the Bible, all history, all science, all government, all commerce, and nearly all social intercourse go with it.

The great activity of the tongue, in articulating sounds, has already been mentioned; and it may be of some passing interest to notice the wonderful powers of the *eye*, in conveying ideas to the mind from writing. Take the same example of the numbers from *one* to *one hundred*, written down, and you can run your eye over the list, and be assured that every number is in it, in about one half the time it would require to pronounce the words with the voice; and not only so, but you can, in the same short time, determine whether every word is spelled correctly, by which it is evident that every separate letter, amounting to eight hundred and sixty four, has been recognized, and reported to the mind, within the incredibly short space of twenty seconds, or one third of a minute.

I have already intimated my opinion that in the world's history, certain inventions and discoveries occurred, of peculiar value, on account of their great efficiency in facilitating all other inventions and discoveries. Of these were the arts of writing and of printing -- the discovery of America, and the introduction of Patent-laws. The date of the first, as already stated, is unknown; but it certainly was as much as fifteen hundred years before the Christian era; the second -- printing -- came in 1436, or nearly three thousand years after the first. The others followed more rapidly -- the discovery of America in 1492, and the first patent laws in 1624. Though not apposite to my present purpose, it is but justice to the fruitfulness of that period, to mention two other important events -- the Lutheran Reformation in 1517, and, still earlier, the invention of negroes, or, of the present mode of using them, in 1434. But, to return to the consideration of

printing, it is plain that it is but the *other* half -- and in real utility, the *better* half -- of writing; and that both together are but the assistants of speech in the communication of thoughts between man and man. When man was possessed of speech alone, the chances of invention, discovery, and improvement, were very limited; but by the introduction of each of these, they were greatly multiplied. When writing was invented, any important observation, likely to lead to a discovery, had at least a chance of being written down, and consequently, a better chance of never been forgotten; and of being seen, and reflected upon, by a much greater number of persons; and thereby the chances of a valuable hint being caught, proportionally augmented. By this means the observation of a single individual might lead to an important invention, years, and even centuries after he was dead. In one word, by means of writing, the seeds of invention were more permanently preserved, and more widely sown. And yet, for the three thousand years during which printing remained undiscovered after writing was in use, it was only a small portion of the people who could write, or read writing; and consequently the field of invention, though much extended, still continued very limited. At length printing came. It gave ten thousand copies of any written matter, quite as cheaply as then were given before; and consequently a thousand minds were brought into the field where there was but one before. This was a great *gain*; and history shows a great *change* corresponding to it, in point of time. I will venture to consider *it*, the true termination of that period called "the dark ages." Discoveries, inventions, and improvements followed rapidly, and have been increasing their rapidity ever since. The effects could not come, all at once. It required time to bring them out; and they are still coming. The *capacity* to read, could not be multiplied as fast as the *means* of reading. Spelling-books just began to go into the hands of the children; but the teachers were not very numerous, or very competent; so that it is safe to infer they did not advance so speedily as they do now-a-days. It is very probable -- almost certain -- that the great mass of men, at that time, were utterly unconscious, that their *conditions*, or their *minds* were capable of improvement. They not only looked upon the educated few as superior beings; but they supposed themselves to be naturally incapable of rising to equality. To immancipate the mind from this false and under estimate of itself, is the great task which printing came into the world to perform. It is difficult for us, *now* and *here*, to conceive how strong this slavery of the mind was; and how long it did, of necessity, take, to break it's shackles, and to get a habit of freedom of thought, established. It is, in this connection, a curious fact that a new country is most favorable -- almost necessary -- to the immancipation of thought, and the consequent advancement of civilization and the arts. The human family originated as is thought, somewhere in Asia, and have worked their way principally Westward. Just now, in civilization, and the arts, the people of Asia are entirely behind those of Europe; those of the East of Europe behind those of the West of it; while we,

here in America, *think* we discover, and invent, and improve, faster than any of them. *They* may think this is arrogance; but they can not deny that Russia has called on us to show her how to build steam-boats and railroads -- while in the older parts of Asia, they scarcely know that such things as S.Bs & RR.s. exist. In anciently inhabited countries, the dust of ages -- a real downright old-fogyism -- seems to settle upon, and smother the intellects and energies of man. It is in this view that I have mentioned the discovery of America as an event greatly favoring and facilitating useful discoveries and inventions.

Next came the Patent laws. These began in England in 1624; and, in this country, with the adoption of our constitution. Before then [these?], any man might instantly use what another had invented; so that the inventor had no special advantage from his own invention. The patent system changed this; secured to the inventor, for a limited time, the exclusive use of his invention; and thereby added the fuel of *interest* to the *fire* of genius, in the discovery and production of new and useful things.

References

All references used in this story were identified at the point they were used in the story.

Recommended Reading

Story of the Strevell Museum by Charles Nettleton Strevell.

As I Recall Them by Charles Nettleton Strevell.

Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency by Guy C. Fraker

A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit by Guy C. Fraker

Websites

All of Abraham Lincoln's Law Cases can be researched at Tinyurl.com/54e7mebk.

Most of the rare documents found in doing research for this book were uploaded to Archive.Org. One can search that website using the search term "Pontiac + Illinois" to find these documents. All documents may be viewed or downloaded from this website.

Other Sources of Information

The library at the University of Utah has an extensive collection of material donated by Charles Nettleton Strevell. A listing of their holdings can be accessed at Tinyurl.com/yx3wjw7t.

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Author Spotlight



Dale C. Maley

One of Dale's hobbies is history, including the history of Fairbury, Illinois. Dale has written over 20 books on Fairbury and Livingston County history. He has also written over 200 history stories for the Fairbury Blade newspaper. He has given many lectures to local Fairbury community groups about the history of Fairbury. Dale is President of the Livingston County Historical Society and is Vice-President of the Fairbury Echoes Museum. Both Dale and his wife are 5th generation citizens of Fairbury.

Also by Dale C. Maley

Livingston County History Books

- Coal Mining in Fairbury, Illinois
- Fairbury History Stories: Volume One
- Fairbury, Illinois Book Authors
- Fairbury, Illinois in 1888
- Fairbury, Illinois in the Civil War
- Fairbury, Illinois and the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition
- Fairbury, Illinois, from Prehistoric Times to Modern Times
- Fairbury, Illinois in the World Wars
- Franklin Oliver – Pioneer Settler of Livingston County, Illinois
- History of Murders Committed in Fairbury, Illinois
- Honeggers of Fairbury, Illinois
- Livingston County Historical Society: It's Beginning and Some Later Updates
- The Founding of Fairbury, Illinois
- The Goudy Brothers of Fairbury, Illinois
- The Great Chatsworth Train Wreck of 1887
- The Kring Family of Fairbury, Illinois
- The McDowell Family of Fairbury, Illinois
- Walton Bros. Of Fairbury, Illinois
- William T. Stackpole of Fairbury, Illinois
- William T. Stackpole's 1849 Journey from Illinois to the California Gold Fields

